2005

The State of State ENGLISH Standards

By Sandra Stotsky

Foreword by Chester E. Finn, Jr.

THOMAS B. FORDHAM FOUNDATION
OUTSIDE THE BOX

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Foreword

by Chester E. Finn, Jr.

Two decades after the United States was deemed "a nation at risk," academic standards for our primary and secondary schools are more important than ever—and the quality of those standards matters enormously.

In 1983, as nearly every American knows, the National Commission on Excellence in Education declared that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." Test scores were falling, schools were asking less of students, international rankings were slipping, colleges and employers were complaining, and a lot of high school graduates were semi-literate. America was gripped by an education crisis that centered on weak academic achievement in its K-12 schools. Though that weakness had myriad causes, it quickly occurred to policymakers, business leaders, and astute educators that the surest cure would begin by spelling out the skills and knowledge that children *ought* to learn in school, i.e. setting standards against which progress could be tracked, performance be judged, and curricula (and textbooks, teacher training, etc.) be aligned. Indeed, the vast education renewal movement that gathered speed in the mid-1980s quickly came to be known as "standards-based reform."

By 1989, President George H.W. Bush and the governors agreed on ambitious new national academic goals, including the demand that "by the year 2000, American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy."

In response, states began to spell out academic standards for their schools and students. In 1994, Washington added momentum to this movement via the "Goals 2000" act and a revision of the federal Title I program that called upon every state to set standards and track student and school progress in relation to those standards.

Two years later, in 1996, the governors and business leaders convened an education summit to map out a plan to strengthen K-12 academic achievement. The summiteers called for "new world-class standards" for U.S. schools. "Too often," said then-Nevada governor Bob Miller, "we seem too willing to accept underachieving standards suitable only for a Beavis, a Butthead, or a Bart Simpson. The nation's governors and CEOs are fed up with passive acceptance of mediocrity."

By 1997, 28 states had outlined standards in core content areas. But were they any good? We at the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation took it upon ourselves to find out. That year we published *State English Standards*, our first such appraisal, carried out in the crucial subject of English/language arts and reading (E/LA/R) by Dr. Sandra Stotsky. That pioneering work helped Americans to understand that, while setting standards is vitally important, not all standards are equally able to bear the weight of a comprehensive education-reform endeavor.

Three years later, when we published the *State of State Standards 2000*, 48 states had academic standards for E/LA/R. And though it was understood that standards are just one leg in a reform tripod that also required assessments and accountability, each leg of a tripod must be sturdy or the entire structure may topple.

That is why, when we evaluated E/LA/R standards in 2000, we were blunt and direct about which states had strong standards and which were weak. In that review, also conducted by Stotsky, 15 states earned F grades and 9 earned Ds—this despite the fact that we awarded bonus points to states simply for *having* standards. Yet six states managed to earn As in that Fordham review, proving that this important job could be done well, though most jurisdictions were not doing so.

In 2000, Stotsky found, the most common failings of E/LA/R standards were in the teaching of beginning reading and the study of literature: Less than half the

states expected systematic phonics instruction, only 31 had decent literary standards, and just 21 specified the study of American or British literature. A third of the states had standards that were not even measurable, and half the standards failed to reflect increasing levels of intellectual difficulty, thus providing scant guidance to curriculum developers, test-makers, and teachers.

Raising the Stakes

Since that review, standards-based reform has received a major boost from the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Prior to NCLB's enactment in 2002, Washington encouraged states to set standards. Now, as a condition of federal education assistance, they *must* set such standards in reading and math (and, soon, science) in grades 3 through 8; develop a testing system to track student and school performance; and hold schools and school systems to account for progress toward universal proficiency as gauged by those standards.

Due mostly to the force of NCLB, 49 states (excluding only Iowa, which has no statewide standards) and the District of Columbia have replaced, substantially revised, or augmented their E/LA/R standards since our previous review. NCLB also raised the stakes attached to those standards. States, districts, and schools are now judged by how well they are educating their students; by whether or not they are raising academic achievement for *all* students. The goal, now, is 100 percent proficiency. Moreover, billions of dollars in federal aid now hinge on whether states conscientiously hold their schools and districts to account for student learning.

Thus a state's academic standards bear far more weight than ever before. These documents now provide the foundation for a complex, high-stakes accountability system. "Standards-based" reform is the most powerful engine for education improvement currently operating in the United States, and all parts of that undertaking—including teacher preparation, textbook selection, and much more—are supposed to be aligned with a state's standards. If that foundation is sturdy, such reforms may succeed; if it's weak, uneven, or cracked, reforms erected atop it will be shaky and, in the end, may be worse than none at all.

Mindful of this enormous burden on state standards, and aware that most of them had changed substantially since our last review, in 2004 we asked Sandra Stotsky to undertake a fresh appraisal. The results of that evaluation fill the following pages. Carried out with Stotsky's characteristic rigor and precision, they reveal important gains and disturbing shortcomings.

Key Findings

Though tying federal dollars to school accountability has been controversial and, in some quarters, deplored and resisted, we see evidence that it was precisely the impetus that states needed to improve their E/LA/R standards. Looking across all the states, Stotsky found substantial gains, especially in grades 3 to 8 reading standards, which bear the heaviest weight under NCLB. The average state grade rose from 1.98 in 2000 to 2.41 in 2005. Most states have also heeded the emerging research consensus on early reading instruction and are incorporating the recommendations of Reading First into their standards, including systematic phonics instruction. Overall, they do a better job of addressing listening, reading, and writing skills and strategies than five years earlier.

That's the good news. But, of course, there's more to be said and some of it is bleak. Despite the gains noted above, just 19 states earned "honors" grades on this year's evaluation, while eight received marks of D or F. (Nearly half got Cs.) Moreover, while state standards for early reading instruction have improved, literature remains sorely neglected in those documents—worse, in fact, than before, particularly at the high-school level. This is now the great weakness in state E/LA/R standards, perhaps because NCLB focuses predominantly on grades 3-8. Uncorrected, it portends a generation of Americans who may know how to read but, by the end of high school, cannot be assumed to have read much that's worthwhile, let alone acquired a suitable grounding in the great works of our shared culture. Those blessed with first-rate teachers and fine schools may be okay in spite of shortcomings in their states' standards, but youngsters whose education depends heavily on the state to erect a strong curricular framework are likely to be deprived of a first-rate education—and we know

which kids those will mostly be. Literacy without literature is better than no literacy at all, but it doesn't begin to do justice to the potential of these young people, or to equip our nation with the educated talent on which its future depends.

The newly re-elected Bush administration has made its top education priority the revitalization of American high-school education in general and its inclusion under an NCLB-style accountability regimen in particular. Half the states already have high-school exit exams with consequences for students. If the president has his way, Washington will be pushing every state to set and enforce rigorous academic standards at the high-school level.

Yet in just a handful of states are the high-school E/LA/R standards ready to sustain that solemn burden. More than half of the states do not even acknowledge American literature in their standards and only four—Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Massachusetts—provide sufficient specifics to frame the substantive content of a good high-school literature curriculum. Unless America is ready to settle for graduates who possess reading skills but have read little of significance, the success of the president's proposal is going to hinge on another bold transformation of state E/LA/R standards in the years ahead.

Beyond Standards

Everyone knows that standards are not sufficient unto themselves. They are the foundation of a sound education but not the entire edifice. They set forth the skills and knowledge that the state wants its young people to acquire, but the acquisition process itself has many elements. Teachers must be intellectually and pedagogically equipped to teach what's in those standards; curricula and textbooks (and literature readers) must be aligned with them, as must tests. Without these and other pieces firmly in place, the best of standards may have little impact on achievement. Consider the glum example of California. Its "Golden State" standards for E/LA/R are top notch, yet the state's National Assessment scores in reading and writing are lamentably low. California is a cautionary tale of the chasm that can exist between standards and learning.

Mindful of this problem, Dr. Stotsky did not settle for evaluating the standards alone. She also looked into whether they are being used to inform state assessments, teacher preparation, teacher testing, and professional development. Her findings in this regard are sobering: few states are successfully aligning their tests, teacher training and professional development with their K-12 academic standards. Indeed, 22 jurisdictions flunked this part of the evaluation.

Stotsky offers a number of recommendations intended to point state policymakers toward a sound course of corrective action. All warrant consideration. To me, however, the place to start is by asking whether state officials possess the gumption and resolve to get this right: to insist, for example, that their standards take literature seriously, even though that will entail disputes; to ensure that their tests are truly aligned with their standards, though that may mean changing the tests (and raising the passing score); to insist that their teachers learn, and be examined on, the skills and knowledge that K-12 students are expected to acquire, though that means tangling with university faculty, entrenched bureaucracies, and powerful unions. I worry that many state officials would rather avoid such tussles, even though their schoolchildren will eventually pay the price.

NCLB has raised the stakes, however; made it harder for states to act like ostriches; and exposed school and pupil performance to public scrutiny as never before. Moreover, this report amply demonstrates that it can be done right. Five states now get A grades on their standards and 10 get high marks (A or B) for the ways they align with and apply those standards. Two states—Massachusetts and Alabama—fare well in both areas. The actual, as philosophers and logicians know, proves the possible. Disheartened or confused officials in low-scoring states could do worse than to emulate those that have done it well. Excessive pride in one's own standards could precede a fall. As we go to press, the new District of Columbia superintendent is considering scrapping D.C.'s lackluster academic standards in E/LA/R and math and simply replacing them with the highly regarded Massachusetts standards. Other states with low ratings on this and other evaluations might prudently consider a similar course of action.

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We owe many debts of gratitude. First, as in 1997 and 2000, Sandra Stotsky not only did most of the heavy lifting on this study, but also supplied the deep knowledge and expertise that undergird the evaluation criteria and scoring rubrics and the practiced eye by which these were applied. Now a research scholar at the School of Education at Northeastern University and co-director of the "We the People" summer institute, co-sponsored by the Filene Foundation and the Center for Civic Education, she served as senior associate commissioner in the Massachusetts Department of Education from 1999 until 2003. Her expertise is rivaled only by her passionate commitment to assuring that every young American receives a first-rate education and that every teacher be well prepared to impart such an education.

Joining Dr. Stotsky in this review was Carol Jago, a respected curriculum expert and veteran teacher of high-school English. Ms. Jago also directs the California Reading and Literature Project at UCLA, edits the quarterly journal, *California English*, and writes a weekly education column for the *Los Angeles Times*. She shared responsibility for setting the criteria and scoring rubrics for this review, reviewed 25 sets of state standards herself, and took primary responsibility for appraising the Massachusetts standards.

My thanks also go to Emilia Ryan for designing this volume and to Fordham research assistants Carolyn Conner and Brandy Bones for helping in a thousand ways with the research, editing, and complex logistics of this project. And my gratitude is boundless for the tireless work, good sense, innumerable editorial contributions, and managerial prowess of associate research director Kathleen Porter-Magee, who oversaw this project from start to end—and stayed even-keeled, good-natured, and resolute whenever it stumbled.

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Chester E. Finn, Jr.
President
Washington, DC
January 2005

Executive Summary

Overview

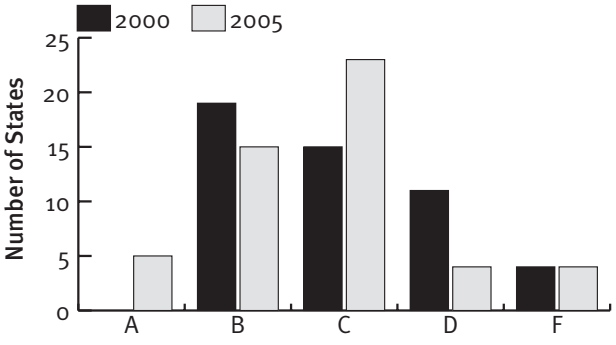
The importance of state academic standards soared in January 2002 with passage of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). Not only does that milestone law require all states to have demanding academic standards in place and to demonstrate steady student progress toward academic proficiency as set forth in those standards, it also links states' accountability for increasing students' achievement to the quality of their teachers. The Higher Education Act also asks states to report annually on pass rates on licensure tests taken by prospective teachers and on how their K-12 standards relate to their teacher-preparation program standards.

For the first time in U.S. history, these key elements of our public-education system are joined—and they're all joined to state academic standards that set forth what K-12 students are expected to learn in core subjects. The quality of those standards thus matters more than ever before. In this review, we appraise that quality in 2005 in reading and English language arts, arguably the most basic and consequential subject of all. Do states' current standards expect what they should? Are they demanding enough? Clear enough? Faithful to what is known about how students learn? And are states using them to guide not only the curriculum and assessment system for students but also their teacher-training programs, the tests that they require of prospective teachers, and their professional development activities for current teachers?

This report answers those and many more questions about reading and English standards in 49 states and the District of Columbia. (Iowa has no state standards.) In addition to official standards documents, a wide variety of supplemental materials were reviewed against 34 criteria organized into six major categories. Criteria were scored on a 4-point scale and grade point averages were converted to letter grades. Though some criteria and scoring rubrics were changed from earlier Fordham reviews of state standards, it is possible to see some important trends since 1997 and 2000.

2005 Honor Roll		
	GPA	Grade
Massachusetts	3.91	A
California	3.68	A
Alabama	3.64	A
Louisiana	3.59	A
Indiana	3.50	A
South Dakota	3.36	B
Georgia	3.27	B
Virginia	3.23	B
Minnesota	3.14	B
Texas	3.14	B
Illinois	3.09	B
North Carolina	3.05	B
Arizona	2.91	B
New Hampshire	2.91	B
South Carolina	2.91	B
Idaho	2.82	B
Mississippi	2.82	B
New York	2.82	B
Nevada	2.77	B
Oregon	2.77	B

Overall State Averages: 2000 and 2005



Major Findings

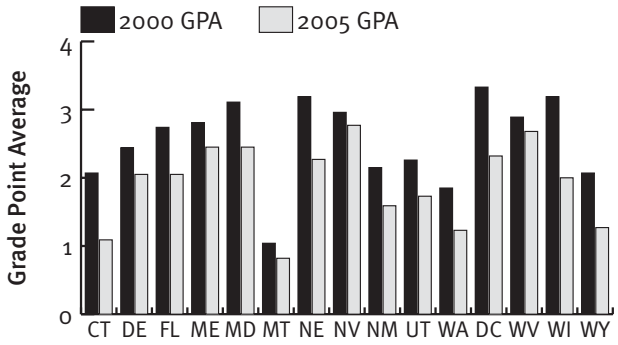
* The distribution of grades earned by the 49 states and the District of Columbia in 2005 reflects real improve-

ment. Twenty states received higher letter grades in 2005 than in 2000, and another 14 earned higher grade point averages. There are now five As, whereas in 2000 no state warranted that top mark. Fifteen states earned Bs, and the average grade point average (GPA) rose from 1.98 in 2000 to 2.41 in 2005.

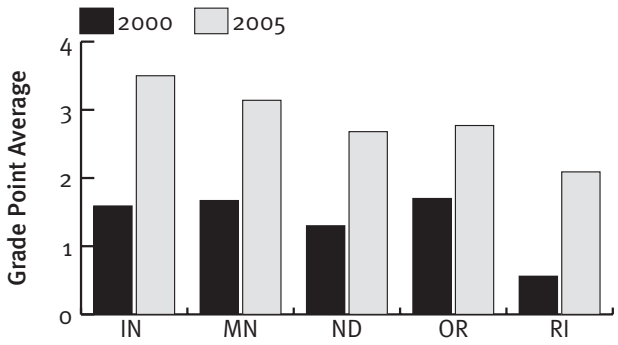
* The five "most-improved" states—Indiana, Minnesota, North Dakota, Oregon, and Rhode Island—saw their grade point averages increase more than one full point.

* Some state standards worsened, however. Eleven states earned lower letter grades in 2005 than in 2000, and four more saw their grade point averages decline.

States whose grades declined from 2000 to 2005



Most improved



Strong on Skills, Weak on Content

* Standards are ubiquitous for listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and strategies as well as for their formal content. But in many state standards documents, one cannot find the crucial content to be used for developing those skills and strategies—the content that, in the final analysis, determines equity in academic expectations across a state.

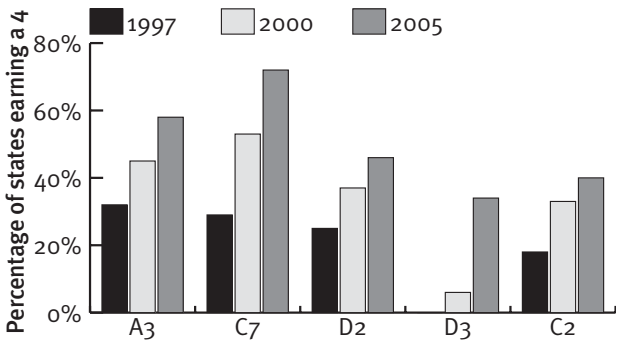
* The standards do a better job of addressing skills, strategies, and processes than literature and cultural content. Indeed, the results from criteria with cultural markers or rubrics pointing to cultural markers show extreme weaknesses.

* Less than one-fourth of the states provide enough standards, guiding principles with cultural markers, or selective reading lists to outline the substantive content of an appropriately demanding English curriculum at the secondary level.

Here, we see a schizoid split. State standards show substantial improvement (20 percentage points or more from 1997 to 2005) in four skill-centered but non-content-specific areas:

- In clear expectations for systematic instruction in decoding skills (criterion A-3),
- In addressing the research processes (criterion C-7),
- In crafting measurable standards (criterion D-2), and
- In increasing intellectual difficulty over the grades (criterion D-3).

Skills, strategies, and processes



They also show gains in addressing reading skills over the grades (criteria A-3 and C-2). Yet they show little or no improvement in areas indicating the substantive content of the English curriculum (criteria A-5, C-3, and C-6) or the level of difficulty in reading expected by

Table 1: 2005 Final Grades

by state rank

State	GPA	Grade	Rank
Massachusetts	3.91	A	1
California	3.68	A	2
Alabama	3.64	A	3
Louisiana	3.59	A	4
Indiana	3.50	A	5
South Dakota	3.36	B	6
Georgia	3.27	B	7
Virginia	3.23	B	8
Minnesota	3.14	B	9
Texas	3.14	B	9
Illinois	3.09	B	11
North Carolina	3.05	B	12
Arizona	2.91	B	13
New Hampshire	2.91	B	13
South Carolina	2.91	B	13
Idaho	2.82	B	16
Mississippi	2.82	B	16
New York	2.82	B	16
Nevada	2.77	B	19
Oregon	2.77	B	19
North Dakota	2.68	C	21
Pennsylvania	2.68	C	21
West Virginia	2.68	C	21
Oklahoma	2.64	C	24
Ohio	2.55	C	25
Maryland	2.45	C	26
Maine	2.45	C	26
National Average: 2.41			
Vermont	2.41	C	28
Missouri	2.36	C	29
Arkansas	2.32	C	30
Washington, DC	2.32	C	30
Nebraska	2.27	C	32
Rhode Island	2.09	C	33
Delaware	2.05	C	34
Florida	2.05	C	34
Wisconsin	2.00	C	36
New Jersey	1.95	C	37
Hawaii	1.91	C	38
Kansas	1.91	C	38
Colorado	1.82	C	40
Kentucky	1.77	C	41
Utah	1.73	C	42
Alaska	1.68	D	43
New Mexico	1.59	D	44
Tennessee	1.45	D	45
Michigan	1.41	D	46
Wyoming	1.27	F	47
Washington	1.23	F	48
Connecticut	1.09	F	49
Montana	0.82	F	50
Iowa	*	*	*

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of this review.

Table 2: 2005 to 2000 Comparison

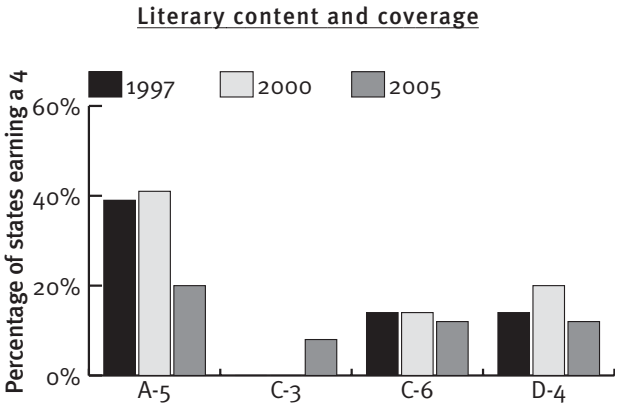
alphabetically by state

	2005 Grade	2000 Grade	2005 GPA	2000 GPA	Change
Alabama	A	B	3.64	3.37	+0.27
Alaska	D	D	1.68	1.63	+0.05
Arizona	B	B	2.91	2.85	+0.06
Arkansas	C	C	2.32	1.89	+0.43
California	A	B	3.68	3.48	+0.20
Colorado	C	D	1.82	1.63	+0.19
Connecticut	F	C	1.09	2.07	-0.98
Delaware	C	C	2.05	2.44	-0.39
Florida	C	B	2.05	2.74	-0.69
Georgia	B	B	3.27	2.89	+0.38
Hawaii	C	D	1.91	1.33	+0.58
Idaho	B	*	2.82	*	*
Illinois	B	B	3.09	3.04	+0.05
Indiana	A	D	3.50	1.59	+1.91
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	C	D	1.91	1.44	+0.47
Kentucky	C	D	1.77	1.63	+0.14
Louisiana	A	B	3.59	2.96	+0.63
Maine	C	B	2.45	2.81	-0.36
Maryland	C	B	2.45	3.11	-0.66
Massachusetts	A	B	3.91	3.48	+0.43
Michigan	D	F	1.41	1.00	+0.41
Minnesota	B	D	3.14	1.67	+1.47
Mississippi	B	C	2.82	2.41	+0.41
Missouri	C	D	2.36	1.48	+0.88
Montana	F	F	0.82	1.04	-0.22
Nebraska	C	B	2.27	3.19	-0.92
Nevada	B	B	2.77	2.96	-0.19
New Hampshire	B	C	2.91	2.07	+0.84
New Jersey	C	D	1.95	1.52	+0.43
New Mexico	D	C	1.59	2.15	-0.56
New York	B	C	2.82	2.59	+0.23
North Carolina	B	B	3.05	2.74	+0.31
North Dakota	C	F	2.68	1.30	+1.38
Ohio	C	C	2.55	1.78	+0.77
Oklahoma	C	C	2.64	2.07	+0.57
Oregon	B	D	2.77	1.70	+1.07
Pennsylvania	C	C	2.68	2.63	+0.05
Rhode Island	C	F	2.09	0.56	+1.53
South Carolina	B	B	2.91	2.89	+0.02
South Dakota	B	C	3.36	2.59	+0.77
Tennessee	D	D	1.45	1.41	+0.04
Texas	B	B	3.14	2.74	+0.40
Utah	C	C	1.73	2.26	-0.53
Vermont	C	C	2.41	1.78	+0.63
Virginia	B	B	3.23	2.96	+0.27
Washington	F	C	1.23	1.85	-0.62
Washington, DC	C	B	2.32	3.33	-1.01
West Virginia	C	B	2.68	2.89	-0.21
Wisconsin	C	B	2.00	3.19	-1.19
Wyoming	F	C	1.27	2.07	-0.80

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of this review.

Note: In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

graduation (criterion D-4). Although a few offer some content-specific literature standards for high school, there has been an actual decline in the number of states that want English teachers to know exactly how high their academic expectations should be for students by the time they are ready to graduate. A few states have added some titles or authors of literary works as indices of the intellectual level for which they want teachers to aim, but more have eliminated examples of titles or authors, leaving their high school literature and reading standards intellectually vague and culturally barren.



The Impact of NCLB

Most of the improvements in state English standards since 2000 are likely due to the influence of NCLB, especially the increase in states with strong standards for beginning reading. Not only do more than half now have strong beginning reading standards; many use the exact research-based framework in Reading First to organize them. Most states seem to have accepted the research consensus on beginning reading instruction. This means their elementary schools now have a sound framework for selecting reading programs, curriculum materials, and assessment instruments, and their teachers have clear and teachable academic objectives to aim for.

The influence of NCLB is also visible in the increasing number of states with a strong vocabulary strand in their English standards, in the "measurability" of their standards, and in the evidence of increasing intellectual difficulty through the grades. The grade-by-grade testing requirements in NCLB evidently prompted many states with vague or multi-grade standards to craft grade-specific reading and writing expectations.

Not only are many states' present expectations more specific and understandable (and organized more coherently) than before, for the most part they are also better linked from grade to grade. These features should lead to state tests that are more highly related from grade to grade and will make increases in student scores from year to year clearer to interpret.

Literature Left Behind

The central problem that remains in today's English standards in most states is that what passes for literature standards at the secondary level is unteachable, content-light, or both. Three critical deficiencies are widespread:

• Absent content

Most state standards fail to outline the substantive content of the literature curriculum in an intellectually coherent way. The study of American literature is not required in about half of the states. Few offer illustrative titles, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions as indices of reading growth and literary quality, or examples of milestones in the history of the English language. Few offer descriptions of classroom activities using specific literary works. Such a goal as reading texts representing "universal themes, diverse cultures and perspectives, and the common aspects of human existence" (New Jersey) bespeaks not broad-mindedness but rather an unwillingness or inability to make professional judgments. Nebulous goals lead to an ever-changing smorgasbord for literary study, not a sequenced and coherent curriculum.

• Illusory demands

While all states address, to some extent, the formal content of literary study, many do not address it in all types of imaginative work systematically over the grades. Dramatic literature, in particular, is given short shrift. A state's formal content may seem

demanding (e.g., when it expects study of such literary devices as irony or flashbacks), but that content can be addressed as easily in simple or inferior texts as in complex texts with literary qualities.

• Unteachable standards

Even more serious than content-light standards are unteachable ones, such as: "Draw on a broad base of knowledge about the themes, ideas, and insights found in classical literature while reading, interpreting, and reflecting on contemporary texts" (Wisconsin); "compare and contrast various languages…found in literature" (Kansas); "discuss, analyze, and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict" (Connecticut); "demonstrate an understanding of the relationship among perception, thought, and language" (Maine); and "analyze and evaluate the great literary works from a variety of cultures to determine their contribution to the understanding of self, others, and the world" (Washington). Such standards cannot be taught by normal teachers to normal secondary students no matter how long the school day or year.

The failure of states to provide content-rich and content-specific standards for literary and non-literary reading at the secondary level negatively influences three major areas of reform. First, by leaving the quality and complexity of literary texts unclear, it gives teachers and administrators no basis for achieving equity across schools. Second, it may affect the quality of literary passages used in state assessments and reduce the role of literary reading in them. (In just 16 states do assessments contain as many literary as non-literary passages.) Third, it has a profound impact on the academic courses taken by prospective English teachers, as well as on the content of their subsequent professional development.

Teachers

Unteachable standards let everyone off the hook, especially university faculty involved with teacher preparation. If both the English and education faculty in institutions of higher education are not held responsible for preparing prospective English teachers to be capable of addressing content-rich and content-specific K-12 literature standards, states may see no gains in student reading beyond the early grades. Even there, however, few states require prospective elementary teachers to use the state's beginning reading standards in their student teaching or to pass a subject matter test of reading pedagogy that addresses the research-based requirements of Reading First. These are huge holes that need to be plugged.

Recommendations

• Involve teachers
States should ask a group of experienced and well-educated high school English teachers to revise their literature and reading standards from grades 5 through 12.

• Involve the public
State officials should sponsor widespread public discussion of the role of literature in the secondary English curriculum and the proportion of passages on state assessments that should reflect literary study.

• Require subject-area mastery
State policymakers should require all prospective teachers of elementary, special education, and English language learner students to pass (with a high cut score) a subject matter test of reading pedagogy that reflects the research-based framework of Reading First.

• Align teacher-training programs to K-12 standards
States should require their teacher-training programs, subject-matter tests for licensure, evaluations of student teaching, and professional development programs to address the academic knowledge needed for teaching content-specific and content-rich literature standards appropriate for grades 5 to 12.

Introduction

Background

For the better part of 20 years, education reformers have believed that setting rigorous statewide academic standards, and holding schools accountable for how well their students meet those standards, are central to improving the overall quality of primary and secondary education in America. Strong academic standards enable parents, teachers, and voters to share common expectations for what all young people should know and be able to do. They can help to ensure that students throughout a state are held to the same high academic standards no matter what schools they attend. Standards also promote coherent educational practices by encouraging teachers to align their pedagogy and instructional materials with sound assessment practices. By holding all schools accountable for meeting those standards, education leaders can work to reduce gaps in achievement among students and ensure that all are afforded an equal opportunity to succeed, regardless of language background, socioeconomic status, race, disability, or family circumstance.

Beginning in the late 1980s, state leaders came to see the value of academic standards to guide teaching and learning. Because states are ultimately responsible for the quality of education that their students receive, and because there is much debate over what is most important to learn in core subjects like English and mathematics, state leaders also came to see their own content standards as more relevant than those developed by national organizations. Nowhere was this truer than in English language arts and reading (E/LA/R).

Although the national standards created by professional education organizations were supposed to serve as models for states and local school systems, the two groups responsible for guiding the efforts of E/LA/R teachers—the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA)—failed to provide a suitable model. When the final document produced by their joint effort was released in March 1996, after four years of development, it was severely criticized by a range of commentators. A spokesman for then-U.S. Education Secretary Richard Riley described the standards as "more like a statement of philosophy." *The New York Times* castigated the report for foggy language and lack of substance. And the late Albert Shanker, former president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), took them to task for not being "standards at all" and for throwing out "the best hope for getting some kind of equity among our widely disparate English curriculums." Indeed, the AFT's own report, *Making Standards Matter 1996*, rated a large number of state E/LA/R standards documents as unacceptable. This was not surprising: The states had no exemplary model to draw on and had been left to develop E/LA/R standards on their own.

In 1996, the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation asked me to do a detailed review of the state standards that existed at the time. Developing a review form with 34 criteria organized in five major sections, I reviewed almost all of the available state E/LA/R standards documents. The standards in 21 of the 28 states I reviewed had been tentatively judged by the AFT to be clear and specific enough to meet its "common core" criterion. My own review, however, published by Fordham in 1997, found few of these state standards capable of serving the intended purposes.

Two years later, the number of states with approved E/LA/R standards had jumped to 49 (including the District of Columbia). At Fordham's invitation, I undertook a second round of reviews in 1999, using the same criteria. Published in January 2000, the completed report highlighted areas of strength and weakness in these 49 sets of standards and compared the changes since 1997 on 11 criteria. To my knowledge, there has been no detailed review of state standards for English language arts and reading since then.

Why This Report

In 2002, the standards world experienced a seismic jolt from the federal No Child Left Behind act (NCLB). In

this major revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the federal government expects much more from each state in return for its Title I funds than it previously had. Specifically, NCLB requires each state to ensure that by 2014, all students are "proficient" in reading and mathematics. In pursuit of that goal, states need to have in place demanding academic standards, reliable systems for assessing whether all subgroups of students meet those standards, and plans for holding schools accountable for progress toward full proficiency. In 2003, all states had written such an accountability plan; by mid-2004, all of these plans had partial or full approval from the U.S. Department of Education. Thus, at least on paper, all states should have strong standards in both reading and mathematics.

Because the world of standards-based reform had changed so dramatically and so much now hangs on the quality of the standards themselves, Fordham invited me to undertake a third round of reviews in early 2004. In this review, I sought to find out more than whether all states do in fact have E/LA/R standards that, when properly implemented, can be expected to lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students. Because NCLB requires a "highly qualified" teacher in every public classroom, I also wanted to find out whether the states are using their standards as academic guidelines for the content of their teacher-preparation programs, for tests of subject-matter knowledge for prospective teachers, and for the continuing professional development of their current teaching force. For the first time in our national history, these three components of our system of public education are directly linked by law to student achievement. Teacher preparation is also linked to K-12 standards by provisions of the Higher Education Act requiring information on the relationship between student standards and teacher-preparation standards in annual state reports on pass rates for the licensure tests taken by prospective teachers completing a state's teacher-training programs. NCLB has thus made state standards count as never before—and created powerful pressure for states to treat their entire public education system as an organic whole centered around what they expect their K-12 students to learn.[1] Hence it matters more than ever whether a state's K-12 standards are demanding and comprehensive, for what they can strongly influence, in addition to the school curriculum, is the quality of the teacher who is expected to teach to them and will be held accountable for doing so.

The Documents Reviewed

This report is based on current standards documents for 49 states and the District of Columbia through July 2004. (Iowa, on principle, has no statewide standards.) In addition to the official standards documents, I reviewed a wide variety of supplemental materials, often because they were recommended by state education department staff as important supplements to their standards or additional sources of information about their standards. These materials included supplementary grade-level expectations (typically from kindergarten or grade 3 to grade 8); test specifications or frameworks for reading and writing; criteria or rubrics for assessing writing and exemplars of different performance levels; handbooks for teachers or assessors; resource guides; curriculum documents; early literacy competencies; and information on the alignment of each state's teacher-preparation standards to its student standards in its 2003 Title II report on pass rates for its licensure tests. Aside from drafts of a few standards documents or assessment blueprints that had not been posted and were therefore mailed to my research assistant, all the materials I reviewed are available on state websites. Further information about the standards, assessment blueprints, and other uses of the standards was obtained via phone or e-mail from staff at state departments of education. All documents reviewed are identified in the state summaries beginning on page 29.

How many states have revised their standards documents since the 2000 report was prepared? Almost all have either revised the standards themselves or added grade level expectations or other supplements to refine or extend them. The vast majority did so in 2003 or 2004, most likely in response to NCLB's requirements. Where earlier documents are still in use, I reviewed them afresh because the additional materials provided new information with which to appraise them, because in a few cases there were important differences between the document downloaded from the state's website and

the one I had reviewed in 2000, and because I had made some changes in my review criteria and rubrics.

The 2005 Review Form: Criteria and Rubrics

The policy shift reflected in NCLB—from a time when standards were voluntary to a time when they are a necessary element of a comprehensive education reform plan that links teacher quality and professional development to student achievement—led to a rethinking of the review form and rubrics. I revised several criteria in the original form (Sections A to E) to upgrade expectations and eliminated a few because of redundancy, leaving a total of 28 criteria in these sections. I also added a new group of criteria (Section F) to evaluate whether and how states use their K-12 standards to inform state-sponsored professional development for teachers, state-approved teacher-training programs, and state tests for teacher licensure. I also altered the rubrics used to score states on each criterion, primarily to hold state standards to higher expectations because of federal policy changes since 2000. Appendix A contains the full 2005 review form showing the individual criteria and their rubrics, with notes explaining the changes in the criteria and rubrics for the 2005 review and my methodology.

Although the review form used for this report is not identical to the one used in 1997 and 2000, overall comparisons between 2000 and 2005 can be made because most of the criteria are similar if not identical, and the states' scores on Section F were not used to calculate state grades. The increased expectations embodied in the criteria and rubrics in 2005 account for some of the difference between the grade a state earned in 2000 and its new grade. The rest of the difference is accounted for by changes in the standards themselves, whether due to wholesale revisions of those standards or the introduction of supplements and grade-level expectations. As in 1997 and 2000, I provide comments on the review form for each state to support the rating for each criterion, in some cases quoting from the standards or related materials. The individual state reviews, which contain detailed information about how each state fared on each criterion, can be found online at www.edexcellence.net.

The 2005 Grading System

The grading system applied to state scores in this review differs from the one used in the 1997 and 2000 reports. In 1997 and 2000, each eligible state received 10 "bonus" points simply for having standards. In 2005, no bonus points are being awarded because all states must have standards. In addition, state grades are now based on a grade point average GPA that is calculated by summing up the number of points the state earned on the 28 criteria and then dividing by 28. The scale is shown below.

Scale Used for Converting a Grade Point Average to a Letter Grade
3.5-4.0 = A
2.7-3.49 = B
1.71-2.69 = C
1.3-1.7 = D
1.29 and below = F

Improvements and Shortcomings: 2000 to 2005

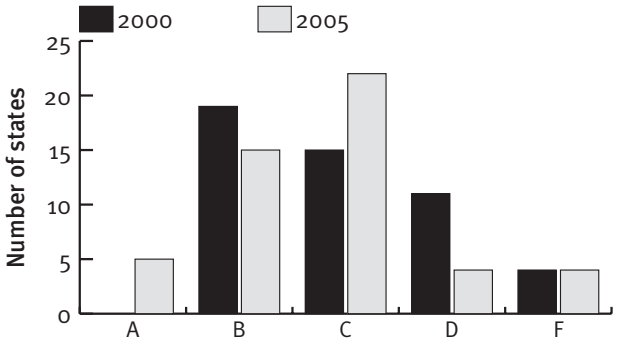
Overall Results: State Grades

First, the good news. As Table 3 and Graph 1 indicate, in 2000 the national grade point average was 1.98 and there were no As, 19 Bs, 15 Cs, 11 Ds, and four Fs. In 2005, the national grade point average is 2.41, and there are five As, 15 Bs, 22 Cs, four Ds, and four Fs. The 2005 distribution reflects real improvement since 2000, especially since higher expectations were built into the criteria and rubrics on the 2005 review form. These trends obviously point in the right direction, suggesting that, overall, states have strengthened their E/LA/R standards in the past four years by revising or supplementing them. Indeed, 20 states earned a higher letter grade in 2005. Another 14 states earned a higher grade point average in 2005 even though their letter grade did not change, and the grade point average for eight of these 14 rose by 25 decimal points or more.

Yet the fact that 20 states have now earned an A or B grade is no cause for satisfaction. No state should be content with a C—which almost half of them received—and there is no excuse for the deficiencies that led to a D or F in 2005 for Alaska, Connecticut, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, Tennessee, Washington, and Wyoming, whether or not they increased their overall grade point averages in 2005. (See table 1 for the rank order of all states by final grade.)

Moreover, an analysis of the differences between 2000 and 2005 reveals some worrisome trends. Even though they earned identical letter grades in both years, four states had lower grade point averages in 2005 (Delaware, Montana, Nevada, and Utah). Eleven earned a lower grade altogether in 2005 (Connecticut, District of Columbia, Florida, Maryland, Maine, Nebraska, New Mexico, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming). Some of these 15 declining states (e.g., Delaware, Florida, Maine, and Wisconsin) have not revised the standards reviewed in 2000, while one (Utah) has revised only its deficient elementary standards (quite well, as a matter of fact), not its even more deficient secondary standards. Most of the others did revise their standards but managed to come up with poorer documents than before (e.g., Maryland, New Mexico, Washington, and Wyoming).

Graph 1: Overall State Averages: 2000 and 2005



All states should have shown real improvement by 2005—or at least kept pace—because they had an opportunity to do so: They either revised their standards within the past four years or added grade-level expectations or other supplements to existing standards. It is true that all states needed to run faster just to stay where they were, but all could have done so. It does not bode well for public education that only two-fifths of our states earned "honor grades" for their standards in this core subject—and that 15 of them are backsliding.

Table 3: 2005 and 2000 Grade Point Averages and Letter Grades*

alphabetically by state

	2005 Grade	2000 Grade	2005 GPA	2000 GPA	Change
Alabama	A	B	3.64	3.37	0.27
Alaska	D	D	1.68	1.63	0.05
Arizona	B	B	2.91	2.85	0.06
Arkansas	C	C	2.32	1.89	0.43
California	A	B	3.68	3.48	0.20
Colorado	C	D	1.82	1.63	0.19
Connecticut	F	C	1.09	2.07	-0.98
Delaware	C	C	2.05	2.44	-0.39
Florida	C	B	2.05	2.74	-0.69
Georgia	B	B	3.27	2.89	0.38
Hawaii	C	D	1.91	1.33	0.58
Idaho	B	*	2.82	*	*
Illinois	B	B	3.09	3.04	0.05
Indiana	A	D	3.50	1.59	1.91
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	C	D	1.91	1.44	0.47
Kentucky	C	D	1.77	1.63	0.14
Louisiana	A	B	3.59	2.96	0.63
Maine	C	B	2.45	2.81	-0.36
Maryland	C	B	2.45	3.11	-0.66
Massachusetts	A	B	3.91	3.48	0.43
Michigan	D	F	1.41	1.00	0.41
Minnesota	B	D	3.14	1.67	1.47
Mississippi	B	C	2.82	2.41	0.41
Missouri	C	D	2.36	1.48	0.88
Montana	F	F	0.82	1.04	-0.22
Nebraska	C	B	2.27	3.19	-0.92
Nevada	B	B	2.77	2.96	-0.19
New Hampshire	B	C	2.91	2.07	0.84
New Jersey	C	D	1.95	1.52	0.43
New Mexico	D	C	1.59	2.15	-0.56
New York	B	C	2.82	2.59	0.23
North Carolina	B	B	3.05	2.74	0.31
North Dakota	C	F	2.68	1.30	1.38
Ohio	C	C	2.55	1.78	0.77
Oklahoma	C	C	2.64	2.07	0.57
Oregon	B	D	2.77	1.70	1.07
Pennsylvania	C	C	2.68	2.63	0.05
Rhode Island	C	F	2.09	0.56	1.53
South Carolina	B	B	2.91	2.89	0.02
South Dakota	B	C	3.36	2.59	0.77
Tennessee	D	D	1.45	1.41	0.04
Texas	B	B	3.14	2.74	0.40
Utah	C	C	1.73	2.26	-0.53
Vermont	C	C	2.41	1.78	0.63
Virginia	B	B	3.23	2.96	0.27
Washington	F	C	1.23	1.85	-0.62
Washington, DC	C	B	2.32	3.33	-1.01
West Virginia	C	B	2.68	2.89	-0.21
Wisconsin	C	B	2.00	3.19	-1.19
Wyoming	F	C	1.27	2.07	-0.80

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of this review.

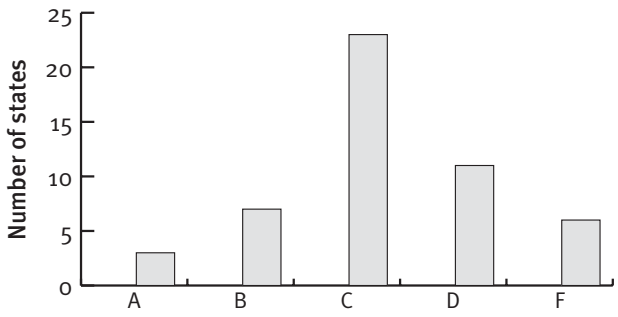
Note: In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Noteworthy Patterns

Applying the method for calculating and grading the states' overall grade point averages in 2005 to the scores in each section from A to E, we find a pattern of results that sheds light on the relative strengths and weaknesses of English language arts and reading standards across the 50 states. Readers interested in the rationales and results for individual criteria in Sections A to E can find them in Appendix B. Comments on the rationales and results for the criteria in Section F begin on page 73.

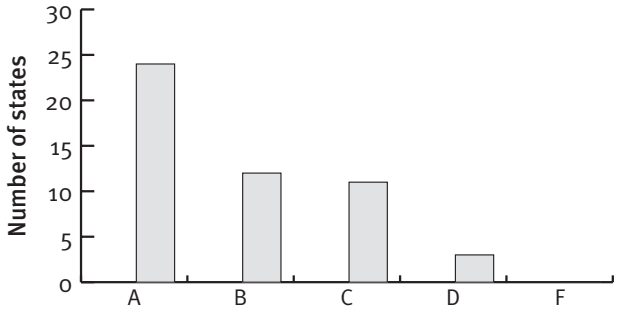
- Section A: The section grades for "purposes and expectations" show notable weakness: just 10 states earned an A or B.

Graph 2: Section A: Purposes and Expectations



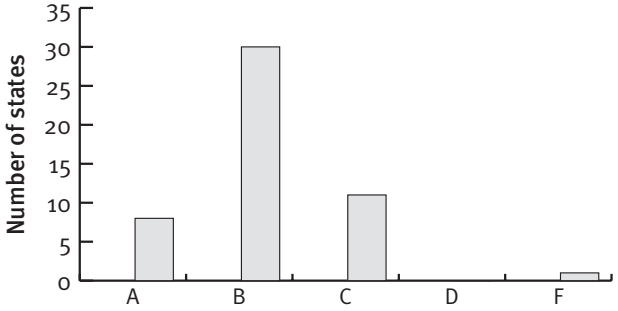
- Section B: All but 14 states have done a good or excellent job of organizing their standards.

Graph 3: Section B: Organization



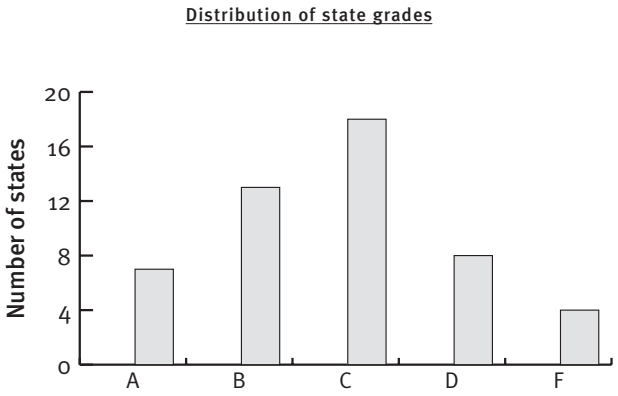
- Section C: Three-quarters of the states earn "honors" marks for disciplinary coverage.

Graph 4: Section C: Disciplinary Coverage



- Section D: For the overall quality of their E/LA/R standards, less than half of the states earned a grade of A or B. More than one-third earned a C, and a dozen received a D or F.

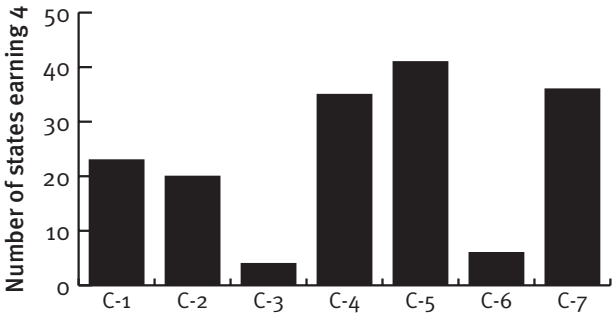
Graph 5: Section D: Quality



Grouping some of the criteria in these five sections in different ways reveals a similar pattern of results. State E/LA/R standards are much more successful in addressing skills, strategies, and processes than in spelling out the cultural and literary content on which those skills are built. Most are woefully deficient when it comes to literature, though this is the essential content of the English curriculum.

- In Graph 6 below, showing results on all the criteria in the section on disciplinary coverage, compare the number of states getting top marks in literary study (C-3) and the history and nature of the English language (C-6) with the number getting top marks on five criteria that focus on skills, strategies, and processes: listening and speaking skills (C-1); reading skills and strategies (C-2); writing for communication and expression (C-4); oral and written language conventions (C-5); and research processes (C-7).

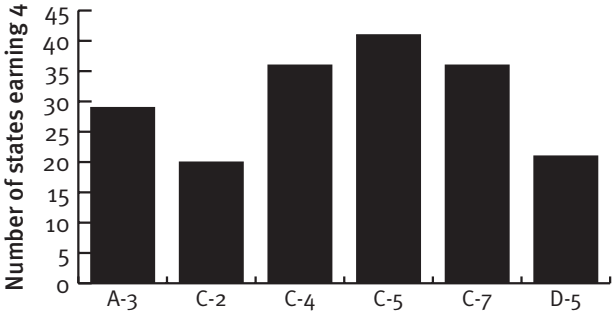
Graph 6: Disciplinary Coverage



Further evidence that standards addressing skills, strategies, and processes are markedly stronger than those addressing literary and/or cultural content shows up when we look at two different cross-sectional clusters of criteria. Graphs 7 and 8 depict, the number of high-scoring states on seven criteria that deal with the former, then on six criteria addressing literary coverage and content.

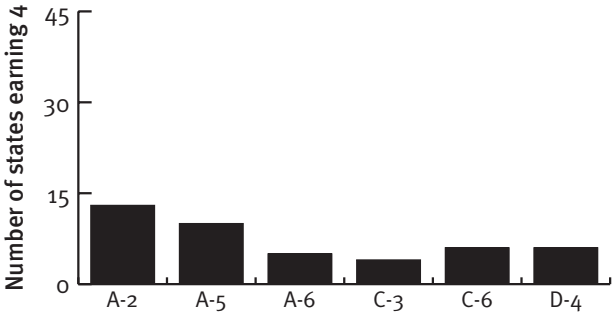
- On expectations for systematic instruction in decoding skills (A-3), 29 states earned a 4.
- On coverage of reading skills/strategies through the grades (C-2), 20 states earned a 4.
- On writing for communication and expression (C-4), 36 states earned a 4.
- On oral and written language conventions (C-5), 41 states earned a 4.
- On coverage of research processes (C-7), 36 states earned a 4.
- On indices of growth in writing (D-5), 21 states earned a 4.

Graph 7: Skills, Strategies, and Processes



- On American citizenship as a goal (A-2), shown below, 13 states earned a 4 by making clear the country in which their students will participate as adult citizens.
- On mention of American literature (A-5), 10 states earned a 4 by mentioning it in an inclusive way and providing illustrative titles and authors.

Graph 8: Literary Coverage and Content



- On assessment blueprints (A-6), five states earned a 4 by weighting literary reading more than non-literary reading on their state assessments.
- On literary study (C-3), four states earned a 4 by providing some content-specific as well as content-rich standards to outline the substantive

content of the literature curriculum in the secondary grades.

- On the history and nature of the English language (C-6), six states earned a 4 by addressing its history as well as its vocabulary and grammar.
- On indices of growth in reading (D-4), six states earned a 4 by providing enough examples of titles and authors, in the high school grades in particular, to make clear the level of reading skill and kind of cultural knowledge they expect for all students by the end of high school.

As indicated by the meager number of states earning a 4 on the criteria in Graph 8, no more than one-quarter of them provide enough cultural markers to outline the substantive content of a suitably demanding English and reading curriculum, especially at the secondary level. Standards for listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and strategies are in all state documents in varying degrees. But, in most documents, one cannot find standards or other features, such as selective reading lists, pointing to the crucial content that is to be used for developing skills and strategies—the content that in the final analysis determines equity in academic expectations across a state. To better understand this phenomenon, we need to look at trends since 1997.

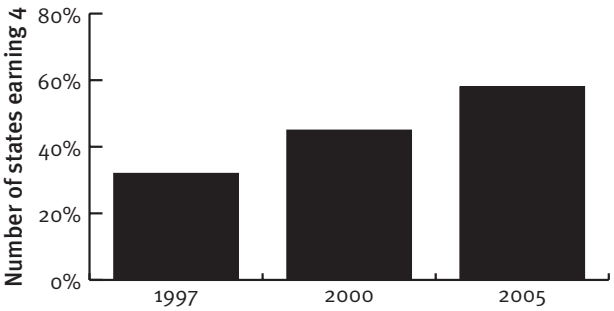
Trends Since 1997

Examining nine (mostly) identical criteria on the 1997, 2000, and 2005 reviews, we find an almost schizoid split in the evolution of those standards that deal with non-content-specific skills and those that focus on content. The first set of graphs illustrates changes in five skill-oriented criteria; the following set depicts four content-centered criteria. The contrasts are profound. In the first cluster, we see gains of at least 20 percentage points since 1997.[2] In the second cluster, we find paltry gains, flatness, or actual deterioration. (In both cases, the results are expressed as the percentage of states earning a rating of 4 on each criterion in each report, because 28 states were reviewed in 1997, 49 states including the District of Columbia in 2000, and 50 states including the District of Columbia in 2005.)

Selected Criteria Showing Positive Trends

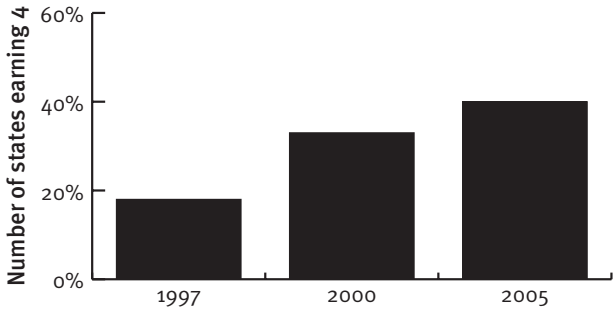
Graph 9: Explicit and Systematic Instruction in Decoding Skills

Criterion A-3: The document expects explicit and systematic instruction in decoding skills as well as the use of other strategies and meaningful reading materials.



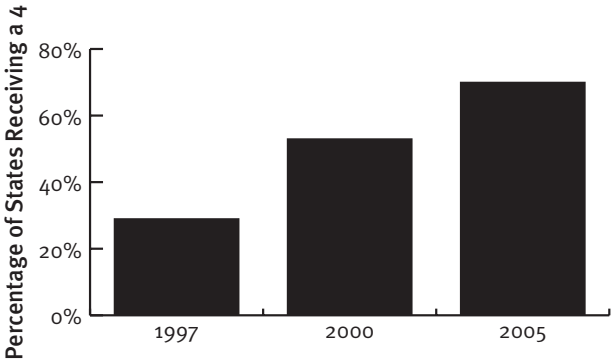
Graph 10: Reading to Understand and Use Information

Criterion C-2: The standards clearly address reading to understand and use information through the grades.



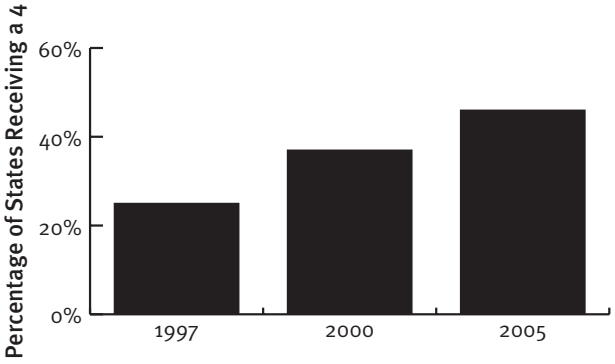
Graph 11: Research Processes

Criterion C-7: The standards clearly address research processes.



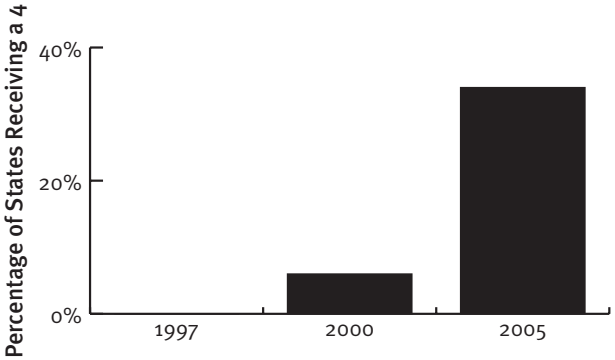
Graph 12: Measurable Standards

Criterion D-2: The standards are measurable.



Graph 13: Increasing Intellectual Difficulty

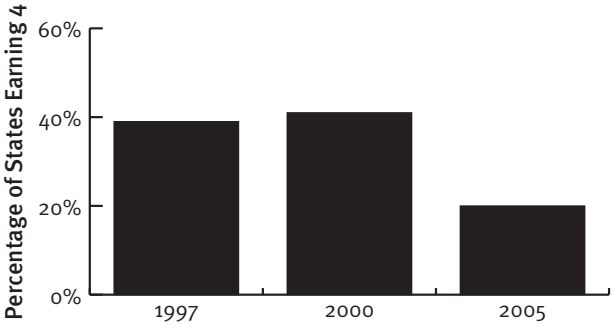
Criterion D-3: The standards are of increasing intellectual difficulty at each higher educational level and cover all important aspects of learning in the area they address.



Selected Criteria Showing Little or No Improvement

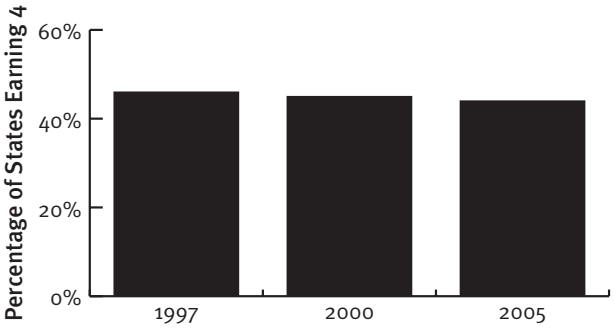
Graph 14: American Literature

Criterion A-5: The document ackowledges the existence of a corpus of literary works called American literature, however diverse its origins and the social groups it portrays.



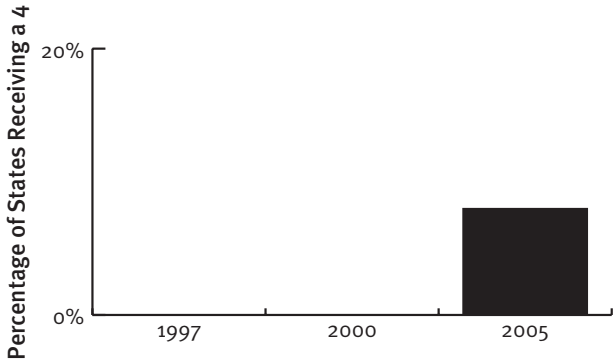
Graph 15: Categories Reflect Coherent Scholarship

Criterion B-2: The standards are grouped in categories reflecting coherent bodies of scholarship or research in reading and the English language arts.



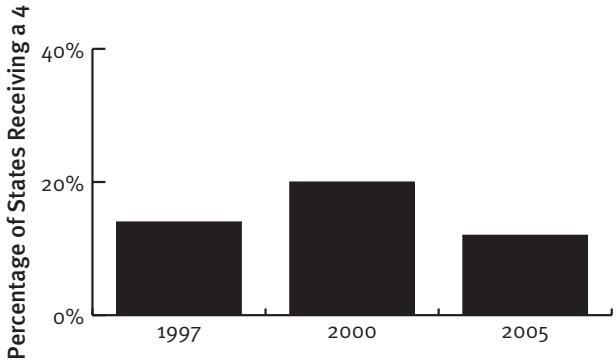
Graph 16: Reading, Interpretation, and Critical Evaluation of Literature

Criterion C-3: The standards clearly address the reading, interpretation, and critical evaluation of literature.



Graph 17: Growth Through the Grades for Reading

Criterion D-4: The standards illustrate growth through the grades for reading by referring to specific reading levels or to titles of specific literary or academic works as examples of a reading level.



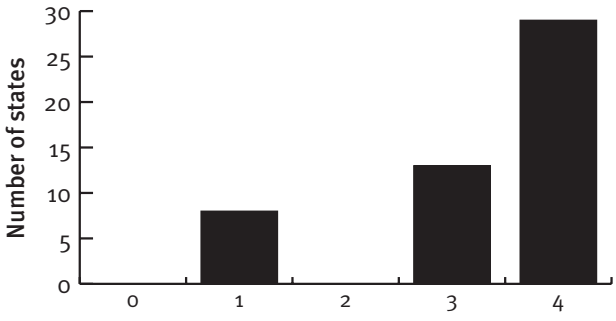
Plainly, there has been little improvement in areas indicating the substantive content of the English curriculum or the level of difficulty in reading expected by graduation. A few states have content-rich and content-specific literature standards at the high school level. But there has been a decline in the number that seemingly want their English teachers to know how high their academic expectations in reading for students should be by the end of high school. A few states have added titles or authors of literary works as indices of the intellectual level for which they want teachers to aim. More have eliminated examples of titles or authors, leaving their high school literature and reading standards intellectually vague and culturally barren.

The Influence of No Child Left Behind

The influence of NCLB is visible in several areas, beginning with the increase in states with strong standards for beginning reading (Criterion A-3, Graph 18). NCLB gave all states enormous help in addressing the first stages of reading instruction. The Reading First program—the sections of NCLB that deal with K-3 reading—provides both a coherent and comprehensive framework for beginning reading standards and a solid research base to undergird this framework. Not only do more than half of all states now have strong and clear beginning reading standards, many use the exact research-based framework of Reading First to organize them. Some states seem to have used the requirements in Reading First as an opportunity to improve what they had in their standards. Others seem to have used Reading First as an opportunity to insert standards for beginning reading for the first time. Most states seem to have accepted the research consensus on beginning reading instruction.

Graph 18:

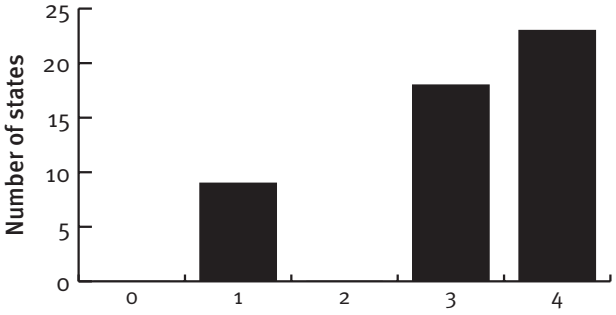
A-3: It expects explicit and systematic instruction in decoding skills in the primary grades as well as the use of various comprehension strategies and meaningful reading materials.



The influence of NCLB is also visible in the increase in the number of states with a distinct and strong vocabulary strand through the grades (C-2, Graph 10). In order to get a 4 on this criterion, states had to have a good vocabulary strand through all the grades. It seems that NCLB's grade-by-grade testing requirements impelled many states to extend through at least grade 8 the strand they crafted for vocabulary development in the primary grades for Reading First. The future pay-off from these new vocabulary standards cannot be overestimated.

Graph 19:

D-2: They are measurable (i.e., they can lead to observable, comparable results across students and schools).

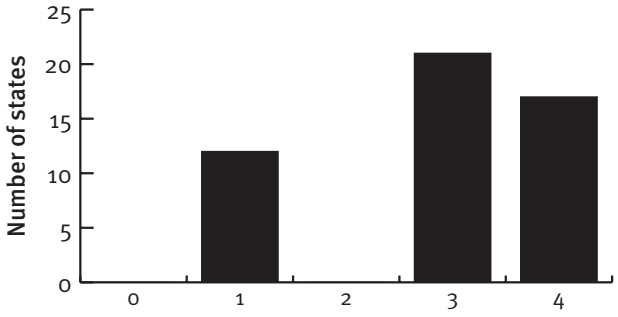


NCLB's influence can also be seen in the increase in the number of states with measurable standards (D-2). Its grade-by-grade testing requirements compelled many states with vague standards or standards spanning several grade levels to craft grade-specific reading and writing expectations (or assessment anchors or other euphemisms) from at least grade 3 to grade 8, if not from kindergarten to grades 10 or 12. In doing so, they had to think carefully about what constitutes measurable achievement at any one grade level as well as what constitutes measurable growth from year to year. The vague or multi-grade standards that we often encountered in 2000 gave teachers and test developers weak guidance.

Not only are a state's new expectations apt to be more specific and understandable (and organized more coherently), in many states they are also better linked from grade to grade, showing measurable increases in difficulty (D-3). Ideally, these features will lead to the development of state tests that are more highly related to each other from grade to grade than were the discrete tests that many states previously used for grades 4 and 8, and they will make increases in student scores easier to interpret.

Graph 20:

D-3: They are of increasing intellectual difficulty at each higher educational level and cover all important aspects of learning in the area they address.

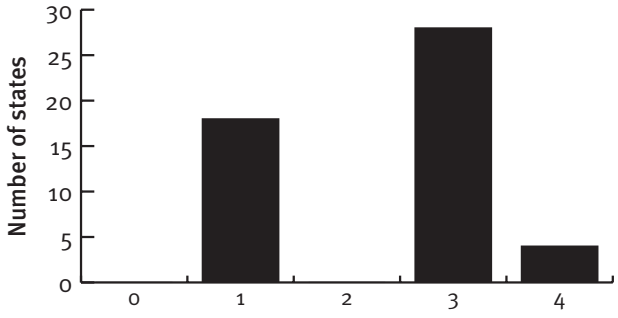


But do not break out the champagne yet. Many states still have a long way to go in these areas. Moreover, the new standards resulting from NCLB's requirements are only now being implemented in classrooms and tests. Time is needed to determine the extent to which Reading First has been able to make sound, research-based practices part of daily reading instruction in the elementary classroom and to eliminate the ineffective practices now dominating many of them.

Far more important, NCLB's influence does not extend to the secondary level and cannot, at present, address the critical deficiencies at this level: failure of most states to outline the substantive content of the literature curriculum, inadequate coverage in many states of its formal content, and the many unteachable or content-light literature standards in most state documents (C-3). Perhaps this situation will change if and when NCLB is extended to cover high school curricula, standards, and tests. But state officials should not and need not wait for Washington to take the lead. They are already responsible for ensuring that their secondary school literature standards are as clear, specific, and demanding as their K-8 standards.

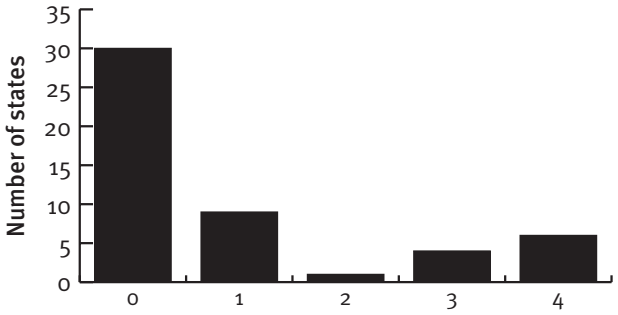
Graph 21:

C-3: The standards clearly address the reading, interpretation, and critical evaluation of literature.



Graph 22:

D-4: They index or illustrate growth through the grades by referring to specific reading levels or to titles of specific literary or academic works as examples of a reading level.



The Vanishing Content of the English Curriculum

Two of these critical deficiencies at the secondary level are reflected in the distribution of ratings for criterion C-3 (the reading, interpretation, and critical evaluation of literature) and D-4 (indices of growth in reading). As the ratings for C-3 indicate, most states fail to provide standards or other features to outline the substantive content of their literature curriculum. States could earn a 4 on this criterion only if they satisfactorily address the formal content of the high school literature curriculum and also provide some key authors or works, specific literary periods and traditions, and/or a selective reading list to outline its substantive content. Only four states did so. Indeed, 30 states earned a 0 on D-4 because they provide no indices to reading growth and reading quality at all. As the ratings for C-3 also indicate, a very large number of states not only have no standards or other features with literary or cultural markers, they also fail to address the formal content of the literature curriculum systematically and equally well over the grades. What the ratings for C-3 and D-4 cannot reveal is the third critical deficiency. Far too many of the literature standards in most of the state documents reviewed in 2004 are unteachable, whether or not they address the formal content of literature systematically. Appendix C provides numerous examples of the unteachable literature standards that can be found in these documents.

1. Substantive Content of the Literature Curriculum

Most states provide no standards that outline the substantive content of the literature curriculum in an intellectually coherent way. The study of American literature by name is not required in about half of the states, and the two-word phrase is barely mentioned in many others. Only a few offer examples of titles, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions as indices of reading growth and literary quality or as milestones in the history of the English language. Few offer descriptions of classroom activities using specific works, never mind clear objectives containing cultural specifics. Such a literary goal as reading texts representing "the diversity of American cultural heritage and cultures of the world" (Wisconsin) or "universal themes, diverse cultures and perspectives, and the common aspects of human existence" (New Jersey) bespeaks not broad-mindedness, but rather an unwillingness or inability to make professional judgments about what pre-college students should actually learn. Nebulous goals like these lead to an ever-changing curricular smorgasbord for literary study with little or no coherence or commonality across a state's school systems, schools, and even classrooms.

Students whose English classes have been shaped by content-light standards may graduate with (1) no understanding of the themes, characters, images, and sources of inspiration that define the body of literary

works called American literature; (2) no knowledge of the classical and British roots of American literature and their continuing influence on today's writers; (3) no insight into the influence of American writers on this country's political, religious, economic, intellectual, and social history; and (4) a limited grasp of this country's public language—the language of its civic life and seminal civic documents, such as the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. To judge by their present E/LA/R standards, this is the likely outcome in three-quarters of the states.

However, the fact that a dozen states provide content-rich and content-specific literature standards, sometimes accompanied by selective reading lists, demonstrates that it is possible to do so. Many examples of the literature standards in these states' documents appear in Appendix D. They prove that, even in jurisdictions with strong traditions of local control, any state can outline the substantive content of its secondary English curriculum.

2. Completeness of the Literature Curriculum

While all states address the formal content of literary study to some extent, a large number do not address it in all types of imaginative work systematically and equally well across the grades. Fiction tends to be addressed reasonably completely, but poetry is not, and dramatic literature, a major component of the high school English curriculum, is given exceedingly short shrift in most documents. Moreover, while a state's formal content may sometimes *seem* demanding (e.g., when it expects study of such literary devices as irony or flashbacks), without standards outlining its substantive content, its formal content can be addressed as easily in simple texts as in complex texts with literary qualities. One can study onomatopoeia in "The Three Little Pigs" as well as in "The Raven."

3. Unteachable Literature Standards

More serious than content-light literature standards are unteachable standards—standards that cannot be taught by normal teachers to normal secondary students, no matter how long the school day or year. Consider these pretentious but unworkable examples: "draw on a broad base of knowledge about the themes, ideas, and insights found in classical literature while reading, interpreting, and reflecting on contemporary texts" (Wisconsin); explain the "significance of literature and its contributions to various cultures" and "compare and contrast various languages…found in literature"(Kansas); "discuss, analyze, and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict" (Connecticut); "compare and contrast the literary contributions of various cultures" (Arkansas); "demonstrate an understanding of the relationship among perception, thought, and language" (Maine); "explain the implication of the text for the reader and/or society" (Maryland); "analyze how cultures interact with one another in literature and other texts, and describe the consequences of the interaction as it relates to our common heritage" (Michigan); "read to understand human experience and the range of choices and possibilities in life" and "read text as art, as representation of culture, and/or history" (Hawaii); and "generalize about universal themes, human nature, cultural and historical perspectives from reading multiple texts," "analyze and evaluate the reasoning and ideas underlying author's beliefs and assumptions within multiple texts," and—my favorite—"analyze and evaluate the great literary works from a variety of cultures to determine their contribution to the understanding of self, others, and the world" (Washington).

Cosmic standards provide teachers with no real curricular guidance and void any guarantee that students across a state are learning the same essential content. If I were an English teacher in these states, I wouldn't have the foggiest idea how to begin to implement such windy standards, especially when no examples of classroom activities accompany them. And if I were a test-maker, I would have no clue as to what exactly is expected at the end of a unit, semester, grade, or full high-school curriculum.

When an unteachable standard is interpretable, one is sometimes amazed by what states evidently think their K-12 students can do. Nebraska sees its high school students having sufficient political sophistication to "analyze the author's political ideology" and sufficient depth of introspection to "analyze the impact of the reader's

experiences on their interpretations." Ohio thinks its high school students have enough reading experience to "compare and contrast varying characteristics of American, British, world, and multi-cultural literature." Wisconsin believes its eighth graders can "develop criteria to evaluate literary merit," even though it does not expect them to read works of literary merit to develop their judgment. One wonders whether the state boards of education that approved such standards, or the state department of education officials who presented such standards to them for approval, ever asked bona fide English teachers how they would go about teaching them—or asked any testing expert how they might be assessed.

Appendix C describes the four types of unteachable standards that clutter state documents. To learn how a state's grade was affected by their presence as well as by the absence of standards pointing to the substantive content of the English curriculum, informative indices of reading difficulty and literary quality, and literary milestones in the history of the English language, please refer to the state summaries that follow.

The complete review of each state's standards, with comments and ratings, can be found online at www.excellence.net.

Alabama

Reviewed: *Alabama Course of Study: English Language Arts, K-12*, 1999; *Alabama English Language Arts Course of Study—Assessment Correlation, K-11*, Summer 1999; *Pathways for Learning—Language & Reading*, 1999; *Alabama Direct Assessment of Writing: Annotated Student Response Packet, 5, 7, & 10*, 2003

Alabama	SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	20
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	12
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	26
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	22
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-0
Total:	80
Final GPA:	3.64
Final 2005 Grade:	A
*2000 Grade:	B

This review covers Alabama's 1999 language arts standards and its 2003 reading standards, both very fine documents. Standards are presented grade by grade from K-12 in six strands reflecting the four language processes, plus viewing and presenting, within a framework of comprehension and expression. A clear legend shows where each objective falls within the six strands (and where it overlaps with two or more strands). It is the best scheme I've seen that draws on the original six processes presented by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). All areas of the English language arts and reading are covered well. In particular, the standards encompass all facets of a beginning reading program, from word identification skills to comprehension strategies to fine children's literature. In addition, a strong vocabulary strand runs through the grades, sometimes as part of the writing strand.

Alabama's document is especially strong in the area of literary study. The 1999 document contains an outline indicating where the study of world literature, American literature, and British literature will take place in grades 9 through 12, accompanied by sample titles for each grade. The 2003 reading standards document provides still more details for literature, and an appendix in the 1999 document offers a list of recommended literary works by educational level.

For the most part, Alabama has a set of English language arts standards that are sufficiently demanding to lead to high academic expectations for all Alabama students. However, specifications for the exit exam in reading do not contain the literary specifics that appear in the standards. Therefore, it is not clear how the state's demanding standards for literary study can actually lead to high expectations for all students, since they seem to play no role in the high school exit exam.

Alaska

Reviewed: *Reading & Writing Grade Level Expectations, 3-10*, March 2004; *Alaska Benchmark Examination Booklet*, June 1999; *Teacher's Guide to the Alaska Benchmark Examination, 3, 6, & 8*, June 1999; *Benchmark Examination Test Item Map, 3, 6, & 8*, June 1999; *Benchmark Practice Tests, 3, 6 & 8*, June 1999; *Reading & Writing Performance Standards*, Approved Jan. 20, 1999; *Common Ground Suggested Literature*, created between 1988 and 1991; HSGQE Test Blueprint

This review covers Alaska's 1995 Content Standards, 1999 Performance Standards, and the draft of its Grade Level Expectations dated February 2004. The grade-level expectations address some of the key deficiencies

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

that existed in the 1995 and 1999 documents, which I reviewed for Fordham's *State of State Standards* in 2000. Alaska's original standards briefly addressed the various areas of the language arts, covering writing adequately, research and reading to a lesser extent, and altogether failing to address any of these areas by grade level. The 2004 draft grade-level expectations are set forth for reading and writing from grade 3 to grade 10. Most expectations are clear and measurable, except for those in the subcategories on thematic connections and cultural connections, and there is now a strong vocabulary strand through the grades.

Alaska

	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	13
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	8
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	12
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	10
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-6
Total:	37
Final GPA:	1.68
Final 2005 Grade:	D
*2000 Grade:	D

Despite the strengths in the 2004 grade-level expectations, more than a few problems remain. To wit: The reading subcategories are numerous, unequal in importance, and often unclear in purpose for an English teacher. (For example, in one subcategory, "the student connects and evaluates cultural influences/events." Such a standard would seem to be more appropriate for a social studies, anthropology, or sociology class, especially in light of the examples given—"colonialism, identity formation, immigration.") There are too many non-literary categories and too few literary categories; literary elements and devices could have been broken up into three subcategories to clarify specific aspects of fiction, poetry, and drama to be taught over the grades, rather than being combined into one large subcategory. There is no clear delineation of key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions that would outline the essential substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum. Moreover, despite some minor wording changes in the expectations for grades 9 to 12, it isn't clear that the standards for these grades are different in intellectual demand. Additionally, the standards addressing the formal content of the literature curriculum are limited and do not contain the kinds of content-rich and content-specific standards that would show intellectual difficulty in high school grades. Though the document indicates that one is to assume "increasing complexity" from grade to grade, there are no clear indices to prove it.

The draft of the grade-level expectations could be strengthened in a number of ways. First, the expectations would benefit from a separate content strand for beginning reading, including fluency and word identification among other things; a content strand for informational reading, sorting out structures, elements, and devices for informational, technical, procedural, and persuasive reading; and a separate content strand for literary study listing elements and devices specific to poetry, dramatic literature, fiction, and perhaps literary non-fiction, with an indication of what elements and devices should be taught at what grade levels. The draft should also provide clear guidance to teachers and test developers by specifying a key group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language to outline the essential content of the secondary school English curriculum. In the absence of these kinds of expectations, Alaska's standards cannot lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all its students.

Arizona

Reviewed: *Standards-based Teaching and Learning: Language Arts Standards; Reading Standards Articulated by Grade Level, K-12*, August 2003

This review covers Arizona's 1996 language arts standards and 2003 reading standards. The latter are grouped into three coherent strands: Reading Process, Comprehending Literary Text, and Comprehending Informational Text. Standards for the other areas

(including writing and literature) appear in the 1996 document, although Arizona's writing standards are currently being revised. Arizona's standards have many strengths. Overall, except for the objectives addressing strategies and processes, they are clear and measurable and show increasing intellectual demand over the grades. For example, they spell out clear expectations for systematic instruction in decoding skills in beginning reading, provide an excellent vocabulary strand through the grades, and admirably expect students by grade 11 to read "works of American literature that reflect our major literary periods and traditions." The standards expect study of literary periods and traditions in British literature as well. In grades 11 and 12, students are expected to read "historically and culturally significant works of literature in American, British, and world literature."

Arizona

	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**15**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**11**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**15**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-1**
Total:	**64**
Final GPA:	**2.91**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**B**

The reading and writing objectives through the grades are first-class and well written. They provide high expectations for the formal content of reading, literature, and writing curricula. The standards under Historical and Cultural Aspects of Literature are especially well done because they pay consistent attention to the text, not its context. For example, in grade 10, students are to "describe the historical and cultural aspects found in cross-cultural works of literature," "compare and contrast classic works of literature that deal with similar topics and problems…," and "recognize ways that forms of literature present similar themes differently across genres." In grade 11, students are to "describe the historical and cultural aspects found in cross-cultural works of literature," "relate literary works and the traditions, themes, and issues of their eras," and "analyze culturally or historically significant literary works of American literature that reflect our major literary periods and traditions." In grade 12, students are to "describe the historical and cultural aspects found in cross-cultural works of literature," "relate literary works and their authors to the seminal ideas of their eras," and "analyze culturally or historically significant literary works of British and world literature that reflect the major literary periods and traditions." Such standards provide not only a clear and concise focus for teachers but also direct them explicitly to meritorious works of literature.

Although Arizona's standards are clear and well organized, they have several limitations. The state does not provide standards in areas other than reading that, consistently over the grades, span no more than two grades; its standards do not address the history of the English language; and the state provides no writing samples or criteria on its website. In addition, the state does not go quite far enough in detail to help prepare students to become literate American citizens by indicating what key authors, works of literature, or biographical selections should be read in the secondary grades. Nor does the state provide titles or authors as examples that would illustrate the growth that should be expected through the elementary and secondary grades.

Arizona education leaders can strengthen the Grand Canyon State's standards by addressing all the limitations spelled out above, but especially by specifying a group of key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language that provide a clearer outline of the essential substantive content of the high school curriculum and by constructing selective lists of titles or authors that could be used to guide state assessments and outside independent reading. Once these improvements are made, the state department of education would be wise to use the standards to inform teacher training programs and professional development so that what teachers learn is closely related to what students are expected to know and be able to do. Without these specifics, it is not clear that Arizona can maintain high academic expectations for all its students.

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Arkansas

Reviewed: *K-12 English Language Arts Curriculum Framework*, revised 2003; *Released Items for Grades 4, 6, 8, & 11*, 2003

Arkansas	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	9
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	8
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	22
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	14
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-2
Total:	51
Final GPA:	2.32
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	C

This review covers the 2003 version of the state's English language arts curriculum framework. This document is written clearly, standards are presented grade by grade from kindergarten through grade 12, and almost all standards are organized in categories reflecting coherent bodies of research or scholarship. Further, they wisely indicate that decoding skills are to be taught in the primary grades as part of a rigorous early reading program. With respect to standards addressing literary study, Arkansas is on the right track. The use of terms to describe specific literary periods or traditions, such as Elizabethan or classical, give teachers and administrators a strong clue to the reading level expected in works assigned in high school grades.

However, there are still many limitations in the 2003 standards. First, the document simply contains too much information. There is no way an English teacher making her way through it to craft her curriculum could know which of these many standards the state actually expects her to teach. Second, it is not clear that decoding skills will be taught with decodable materials, independent of the use of context, so that children acquire fluency in decoding. A large number of standards are still not measurable; too many are statements of process or have no academic point; many are redundant; and those at the high school level tend to be too similar from grade 9 to grade 12. Further, the 2003 literary standards do not provide a clear outline of the substantive content of the English curriculum from grades 7 to 12.

Arkansas could strengthen its standards considerably by drastically pruning and revising them to make very clear which ones the state wants teachers to use for classroom curriculum construction. A concise test framework would also help. To address literary study, Arkansas needs to craft some content-rich and content-specific standards pointing to culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—that outline the essential content of the secondary English curriculum. The state should also develop some selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers might draw for their core classroom curriculum. These standards and lists could also be used to guide state assessments and as part of the state's regulations for approving training programs for prospective English teachers in grades 7 to 12 in the state's institutions of higher education.

California

Reviewed: *English-Language Development Standards for California Public Schools, K-12*, July 1999; *English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools, K-12*, December 1997; *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools, K-12*, 1999; *English-Language Development Standards for California Public Schools, K-12*, July 1999; *California Standards Test Teacher Guide for the California Writing Standards Tests at Grades 4 and 7*, May 2002; Addendum to the May 2002 Teacher Guide for the California Writing Standards Tests at Grades 4 and 7, August 2003; STAR California Standards Test and NCLB Blueprints for English Language Arts, 2-11, October 2002

This review covers the state's 1998 English language arts and reading standards, the same documents I reviewed

for the *State of State Standards 2000* report. It also covers writing assessment guides developed since 1999 and other assessment information not available in 2000.

California	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**21**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**12**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**27**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**22**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-1**
Total:	**81**
Final GPA:	**3.68**
Final 2005 Grade:	**A**
*2000 Grade:	**B**

Organized by grade level except for two-grade spans in grades 9/10 and 11/12, the document provides a balanced and comprehensive language arts program through all its language arts standards. The state's standards are clear, specific, and measurable and address all areas of the English language arts and reading well and comprehensively. (Indeed, the document contains too many lower level objectives in many areas.) The standards are organized into coherent strands: Reading, Writing, Written and Oral English Language Conventions, Listening, and Speaking. Comprehension of informational text is distinguished from literary response and analysis from K to 12. Beginning in grade 8, critical lenses (e.g., biographical, historical, philosophical) are used to describe literary criticism. The standards require study of literary traditions in American literature as well as of literary periods in other traditions and point readers to "Recommended Readings in Literature," a list with many suggestions for quality classic and contemporary books from which teachers and students may choose. Standards for writing are addressed thoroughly, as are all aspects of the research process. To illustrate what is expected of students at various grade levels, samples of student work are provided on the department of education's website for grades 4 and 7 and for the California High School Exit Exam. Regulations for teacher-training programs and licensure are closely aligned to the state's K-12 standards, and prospective teachers must demonstrate knowledge and application of the standards in their practica.

Although California's standards do require study of literary traditions in American literature as well as of literary periods in other traditions, the document does not contain any content-specific standards pointing to key groups of works and authors that outline essential content for the secondary English curriculum. Its reading list is also too voluminous to provide much specific guidance grade by grade.

California could strengthen its fine standards by crafting a group of content-specific literary and non-literary standards that outline the substantive content of the English curriculum from grades 7 to 12. It might also construct selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers could draw for their core classroom curriculum. These content-specific standards and selective lists could also be used to guide state assessments and be used as part of the state's regulations for program approval to strengthen training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12 in the state's institutions of higher education.

Colorado

Reviewed: *Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing, K-12*, July 13, 1995; *Colorado Model Content for Reading and Writing: Suggested Grade Level Expectations, K-12*, February 9, 2000; *Reading & Writing Assessment Frameworks*, 3-10

This review covers Colorado's 1996 Content Standards for Reading and Writing, which I reviewed for the 1997 *State English Standards* report, and its 2000 Grade Level Expectations for Reading and Writing. These are concise and readable documents, commendably suggesting that "the study of literature and writers of the United States honors the heritage and cultures of all people who live or have lived in America, and it thus helps students develop an understanding of our national experience."

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Colorado	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	13
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	7
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	15
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	10
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-5
Total:	40
Final GPA:	1.82
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	D

The areas of writing and research are well covered, as are English language conventions, and the standards in these areas are clear and measurable.

However, the document has several serious limitations in the areas of reading and literary study. It does not seem that students will learn to use decoding skills independent of context, and the vocabulary strand is weak throughout. Most serious of all, there are no standards pointing to a group of culturally and historically significant texts, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—to provide a content outline for the secondary English curriculum.

To strengthen its standards, Colorado needs to craft a strong vocabulary strand across the grades; a standard on the history and nature of the English language; and a group of content-rich and content-specific literature and reading standards that outline both the substantive (authors and works) as well as the formal (literary elements and devices) content of the secondary English curriculum (grades 7 to 12). It should also construct selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers might draw for their core classroom curriculum. These standards and lists could also be used to guide state assessments, independent reading, and the state's regulations for program approval for training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12.

Connecticut

Reviewed: *Language Arts Framework, K-12*, 2003; *Connecticut Mastery Test*, Third Generation, Language Arts Handbook, 2001; *Connecticut Academic Performance Test*, Second Generation, Reading and Writing Across the Disciplines, 2001; *Connecticut's Blueprint for Reading Achievement: The Report of the Early Reading Success Panel, K-3*, 2000; *A Guide to Curriculum Development: Purposes, Practices, Procedures; Suggested Resources for Reading Middle/High School*

Connecticut	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	5
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	9
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	18
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	8
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-16
Total:	24
Final GPA:	1.09
Final 2005 Grade:	F
*2000 Grade:	C

This review covers the 2003 draft of Connecticut's Language Arts Framework for K-12 and its 2001 handbooks for the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test. Its standards are grouped in reasonably coherent categories: reading and responding, exploring and responding to literature, communicating with others (writing, speaking, and research), and English language conventions. They address most areas of the English language arts adequately and are presented grade by grade from 2 through 8, with one set of standards for PK-2 and one set for 9-12. Connecticut's *Blueprint for Reading Achievement*, a 2000 Report of the Early Reading Success Panel, includes all the facets of a comprehensive beginning reading program.

Despite having updated their standards since 2000, Connecticut's overall grade has actually gone down, rather than up. There are many factors that, taken together, contribute to this change. First, as explained in the introduction, the grading is more rigorous. In addition, many features of Connecticut's 2003 standards are not as good as those in its earlier document. Many are not clear, specific, or measurable, primarily because they are studded with difficult-to-interpret reader response and reading/writing process jargon and appear quite unteachable. For example, students are expected to "make judgments about the literary and aesthetic qualities of text," "develop a critical stance to texts" (in grade 3!), "discuss multiple genres that represent similar viewpoints and themes," and "evaluate themes expressed as a comment on life." The language is also pretentious and vague. For example, one standard asks students to "discuss, analyze, and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict." Another suggests that students "maintain a multimedia portfolio that provides opportunities for reflection and dialogue regarding creative processes." Meanwhile, there is little on vocabulary development through the grades. The expectations that negatively influence literary study and reading are even stronger in the 2003 draft than they were in the earlier document. The 2003 version is further limited by its lack of systematic coverage of the diverse literary elements and devices (aside from mention of these words) specific to fiction, poetry, and dramatic literature (which is totally ignored), and by its failure to specify a group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, periods, and traditions that outline the essential content of the secondary English curriculum.

Connecticut needs to craft interpretable and teachable content-rich and content-specific standards, drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—that can guide teachers in the construction of their classroom curricula. It should draw up selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level. These standards and lists could be used further to guide independent reading, state or local assessments, and state regulations for program approval of training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12.

Delaware

Reviewed: *State of Delaware English Language Arts Curriculum Framework Content Standards*, Volume One, K-10, June 1995; *English Language Arts Standard One End of Cluster Expectations and Performance Indicators, K-12*, 1998; *Teacher's Desk Reference K-5*, January 1998; *Teacher's Desk Reference 6-8*, May 1998; *Writing Companions for the Performance Indicators and the Textual Features*, K-12; Configuration of the Delaware Student Testing Program's Writing Test; Delaware Student Testing Program—General Rubric for Writing All Grades; Delaware Student Testing Program—Sample Test Items

Delaware	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**8**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**11**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**16**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-14**
Total:	**45**
Final GPA:	**2.05**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

The documents reviewed include the "End of Cluster Expectations and Performance Indicators for Grades K-5 (1999), 6-8 (1998), and 8-12 (1999)," all moderate revisions of Delaware's 1995 standards document. In the revised version, although standards are presented in grade clusters, performance indicators are given grade by grade. Overall, Delaware's standards, expectations, and performance indicators are clear, specific, and measurable and generally show increases in intellectual difficulty over the grades. All areas of the English language arts and reading are covered adequately, and some, such as the strands for writing and research, are covered extremely well. Further, it seems that decoding skills are to be taught in the earliest grades, although systematic instruction in decoding skills is not indicat-

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

ed as such. Study of the history of the English language appears in the high school years.

The chief limitations of these documents relate to their treatment of literary study. The standards suffer from a variety of expectations or requirements that negatively influence the quality of literary study and the experience of reading literature. In addition, there are no literary specifics in the standards or indicators pointing to the substantive literary and non-literary content of the English curriculum, not even a mention of American literature by name. Although I reviewed the same standards five years ago, Delaware's overall score has gone down slightly, primarily because the criteria addressing the presence or absence of literary specifics were rated more strictly than in 2000.

To strengthen its academic standards in the English language arts and reading, Delaware should eliminate the indicators that negatively influence the quality of literary study. More important, the state needs to craft a group of content-rich and content-specific standards pointing to historically and culturally significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions that serve to outline the essential substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum from grades 7 to 12. It should also draw up selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level as a guide to teachers in the construction of the common core of their classroom curricula. These standards and lists could also be used further to guide independent reading, state or local assessments, and state regulations for program approval of training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12.

District of Columbia

Reviewed: *Reading/English Language Arts, K-12, Performance Standards, Essential Skills, and Technology Integration*

This review covers the document that was available on the District of Columbia's department of education website, which contains content and performance standards (probably dating to 1999), essential skills, and indicators for technology integration. As far as I can tell, these are the same standards that I reviewed for the State of State Standards 2000. Unfortunately, despite many calls and unreturned emails sent to the D.C. department of education, we were not able to confirm this information. The essential skills and technology integration, noted above, were not reviewed earlier and are likely more recent additions to the standards documents.

District of Columbia	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**14**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**8**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**22**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**13**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-6**
Total:	**51**
Final GPA:	**2.32**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**B**

The standards are presented grade by grade from K through 12 and, for the most part, are organized in coherent categories. Overall, the standards cover most areas in the English language arts and reading very satisfactorily; are clear, specific, and measurable; and show increasing difficulty over the grades. The document specifies the study of world literature in grade 10, American literature in grade 11, and British literature in grade 12.

However, the document has some limitations. Although knowledge of sound/letter relationships is to be taught, it does not seem that it will be taught systematically and applied as a word identification skill independent of context. Also, although the D.C. department of education in 1999 provided recommended lists of high-quality literature accompanying the standards for each grade level, no such lists are readily available on the website today. Nor is there any indication that works of literature should be selected for study on the basis of their merit and their historical and cultural significance. Finally, no key authors, works, literary periods, or literary traditions are spelled out in the standards for

American literature. Though major literary periods for British literature are spelled out in the standards, there are no other specifics.

The District of Columbia's average score in this review is lower than in 2000, even though it does not appear that its department of education has substantively changed its English Language Arts and Reading standards. The lower score reflects not only the stricter rubrics used to evaluate all states this year, but also the fact that the reading lists that provided some literary specifics in 1999 are no longer available. In addition, the section on essential skills in the document did not make the standards stronger or provide useful examples.

Although the current document has many strengths, the District needs to specify key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in all major bodies of literature that the English curriculum draws from to outline the essential content of the secondary English curriculum and indicate the levels of reading difficulty it expects in each grade. The District should also develop (or restore) some selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers might draw for their core classroom curriculum. These standards and lists could also be used to guide state assessments and as part of the district's regulations for program approval for training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12.

Florida

Reviewed: *Language Arts Standards, PreK -12; Grade Level Expectations for K-8*, 1998-1999; Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), Reading, 3-10, January 2001; FCAT Reading and Writing Rubrics, 4, 8, & 10, 2003; *What every teacher should know about FCAT;* FCAT Sample Test Books and Answer Keys, 3-10, 2003-2004; *Lessons Learned-FCAT, Sunshine State Standards and Instructional Implications*, January 2002

This review covers Florida's 1996 standards document, the grade-level expectations added in 1998-99 in K-8, the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Test Item and Performance Task Specifications, published in January 2001, and the FCAT rubrics released in 2003. All documents are written in clear prose for the general public.

Florida	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	9
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	7
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	23
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	14
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-8
Total:	45
Final GPA:	2.05
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	B

The 1996 standards and the 1998-99 grade level expectations were reviewed for the *State of State standards 2000*. Although 1998-99 grade level expectations make the original 1996 benchmarks much clearer and more specific in all areas, they do not point to any culturally or historically significant authors, literary works, literary periods, or literary traditions, and none of these are recommended in the other supplementary materials reviewed in 2004. The sample items in Reading, grades 9-10, in the Test Item and Performance Task Specifications reflect a reasonable range of passages, but no classics nor 19th century nor early 20th-century American works are represented here. Moreover, Florida's test (FCAT) blueprints indicate that while 60 percent of the reading passages in grade 3 are from literary texts in contrast to 40 percent from informational texts, by grade 10, only 30 percent of the passages are from literary texts in contrast to 70 percent from informational texts. That proportion is not a fair indication of the appropriate content of high school English classes.

Florida's average score this year is lower than in 2000 for several reasons. The criteria and the rubrics used in this review are more demanding and precise, differing to some extent from those used for the 2000 review. Florida needs to work out some content-rich and specific standards pointing to culturally and historically

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions, drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—that outline the essential content of the English curriculum from grade 7 to grade 12. It should also construct some selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers might draw for their core classroom curriculum. These standards and lists could be used to guide state assessments and the state's regulations for program approval of training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12 in the state's institutions of higher education. Although all oversight seems to be done at the university level, teacher-training programs in Florida are required to align their curriculum with the state's K-12 standards.

Georgia

Reviewed: *Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) Content Descriptions: English/Language Arts; Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Tests (CRCT) Content Descriptions: Reading; Language Arts Curriculum—Kindergarten*, (DRAFT) Jan. 10, 2004; *Language Arts Curriculum—Grade 4-10*, (DRAFT) January 2004; *American Literature and Composition—High School*, (DRAFT) Jan. 10, 2004; *British Literature and Composition—High School*, (DRAFT) Jan. 7, 2004; *World Literature—High School*, (DRAFT) Jan. 20, 2004; *QCC Language Arts Standards and Resources, K-12*

Georgia	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	15
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	11
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	26
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	22
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-2
Total:	72
Final GPA:	3.27
Final 2005 Grade:	B
*2000 Grade:	B

This review covers the 2004 draft of Georgia's standards document—a document with many strengths. Draft standards are presented grade by grade from 4 to 10 and for American, British, and world literature courses at the high school level. In grades 9 through 12, standards for individual courses are to contain sample lesson plans. Most of the draft standards are clear, specific, and measurable. They cover all areas well, and many extremely well. There is a strong vocabulary strand through the grades. Expectations for writing are addressed thoroughly, as are all aspects of the research process. Students are expected to read a specific number of books each year drawing on lists of titles for each grade as a guide to quality. Although the non-fiction selections are not uniformly appropriate for high school, the fiction, drama, and epic literature sections are excellent overall. Georgia expects students to study American literature in high school, especially in grade 11, and British literature in grade 12, with a nice example in grade 9 specifying Georgia poets, Southern poets, and other American poets. There are many content-rich literature and reading standards at the high school level, and overall, Georgia's literary standards do an excellent job in specifying all of the **formal** content of the English curriculum.

There are some limitations in this fine draft, though. It contains an inappropriate and unrealistic strand titled "Reading Across the Curriculum" for all English teachers from grades 7 to 12. Its poetry lists for children are extremely narrow. More serious is the absence of some content-specific standards outlining more precisely the **substantive** content of the literature curriculum—some key authors and works that represent the literary periods as well as literary traditions Georgia expects students to study through the high school grades. Despite the excellent reading lists accompanying each grade's standards at the secondary level, the titles are only suggestions, substitutes are possible, and the directions to test developers are not clear. An informant in the department of education indicated that the "focus [for the assessments] is on providing a variety of diverse reading passages rather than deliberately including certain authors or works…and could include, for example, a friendly letter, directions for a recipe or craft project, a personal narrative, a poem, or an excerpt from a published piece." If test developers use narrow criteria that

exclude passages by historically and culturally significant authors (including most of the titles and authors in the reading lists), then the lack of content-specific standards pointing to key authors or works in the high school standards inevitably means different academic expectations across school districts by graduation.

Hawai'i

Reviewed: *Hawai'i Content and Performance Standards II: Content Standards Language Arts*, August 1999; *HCPS II Performance Standards, K-12; The Standards Implementation Design System (SID)*, August 2000; *Strategic Implementation Plan*, January 2003; *Making Sense of Standards: Moving from the Blue Book to HCPS II*, July 1999; *Teacher's Guide for 2004: Interpreting the Hawai'i Student Assessment, 4th edition*

Hawai'i	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	12
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	10
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	17
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	9
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-6
Total:	42
Final GPA:	1.91
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	D

This review addresses the 1999 version of Hawai'i's standards and the *HCPS II Performance Standards* (August 2000), which considerably strengthen understanding of the 1999 standards. Details of literary elements and techniques are addressed in the performance standards, while together the two documents very adequately address oral and written language conventions. The 1999 standards contain a nice set of rhetorical questions in the writing strand and admirably want students in grades 9 through 12 to read "a well-balanced selection of traditional and contemporary, canonical and non-canonical, and multicultural literature in many genres." While no specific indices to reading difficulty are suggested in these documents, the 2004 Teacher's Guide for Interpreting the Hawai'i State Assessment (an extremely well-written document) contains several released test passages for assessed grades that suggest to some extent the level of reading difficulty expected by grade 10.

However, the documents have some serious limitations. No examples or lists of titles or authors are provided to guide teachers or test developers. The standards tend to be vague, undemanding, and unmeasurable. There are not enough details to establish successively higher levels of intellectual difficulty over the grades, especially in the secondary grades, and the standards are unmeasurable for many reasons: Some are moralistic injunctions, some are process standards, others are expressions of personal taste or reflect values, while still others express lofty educational goals (e.g., "reveals insights about people, events, knowledge and experience"). Some are incomprehensible or impossible to teach (e.g., "evaluate own interpretation within a range of plausible possibilities"). As a result, important areas of the English language arts and reading are not well covered; there is nothing on the development of vocabulary knowledge, and it is not clear that systematic instruction in phonics will take place in the primary grades.

Hawai'i's standards could be considerably improved if they set forth clear academic objectives for teachers. Hawai'i also needs to develop a strong vocabulary strand through the grades. Above all, it needs to craft content-rich and content-specific standards that provide an outline of the essential substantive content of the English curriculum in the secondary grades. Until it does so, its standards are likely to lead to inequities rather than uniformly high expectations for all students because of the various ways in which teachers are likely to interpret the standards.

Idaho

Reviewed: *Idaho Administrative Code, Rules Governing Thoroughness: Language Arts/Communications Standards; Language Arts Mapping Documents from NWEA Idaho*

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Learning Continuum, Feb. 28, 2003; *English Language Arts 12*, Fall 2002; *English Language Arts 11*, Fall 2002; *Language Arts Power Standards*, K-12; *Curriculum Ladders; Data Tools—NWEA*

Idaho	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	15
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	12
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	24
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	17
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-6
Total:	62
Final GPA:	2.82
Final 2005 Grade:	B
*2000 Grade:	not reviewed

This review covers Idaho's Communication/Language Arts Standards, the NWEA Idaho Learning Continuum, and the "Power Standards." All are on its website, but no dates are apparent. Organized in coherent categories, Idaho's standards are presented grade by grade from K-8, with one set for 9-12 in the Communication/Language Arts Standards, and from K-12 in the Power Standards, which are chiefly very terse phrases. They cover almost all areas in the English language arts and reading well—including, it seems, systematic instruction in decoding skills. For the most part, they are measurable and of increasing difficulty over the grades, although standards that expect students to "relate social, cultural, and historical aspects of literature to the reader's personal experience" are basically not teachable, while standards that expect students to "draw upon their own experience to connect to reading and listening" are not measurable. Most standards are also clear and jargon-free except for statements about cultural contexts—whatever these may be—which are never clarified in the standards, continuum, or examples.

However, it is difficult to know how demanding Idaho's standards really are by high school. First, there is only one reasonably full set of standards for grades 9-12. Second, although most standards show meaningful increases in difficulty over the grades, they are too sparse at the high school level and provide no examples of the texts in which they might be embedded. The 1998 Exiting Standards reviewed in 2000 mentioned ancient, British, American, and world literature by name (as do the Power Standards), as well as a few titles appropriate for grade 12. But the current standards refer only generically to traditional or electronic literature, or the literature of a variety of cultures and perspectives, with no clarification of whose cultures or traditions or perspectives students are to study.

To judge by what is in the *Continuum*, it is not clear how these standards can lead to uniformly high expectations for all students in the state without some content-rich and content-specific standards specifying a group of high quality texts, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions that outline the essential substantive content of the high school English curriculum. If, for example, the standards required students to study, at appropriate grade levels, works by prominent authors who were born in or wrote about Idaho, as well as biographical selections about prominent figures in U.S. and Idaho history from Idaho, with a selective list of these works and authors in an appendix to guide teachers and test developers, this would help define the academic expectations in the high school grades.

Illinois

Reviewed: *Reading: English Language Arts State Goals: 1-5*, July 25, 1997; *Reading Assessment Framework (Grades 3-8)*, October 2003; *Writing and Research Assessment Framework (Grades 3, 4, 6, & 8)*, October 2003; *Reading & Writing Assessment Framework (Grade 11)*, March 2004; *English Language Arts Performance Descriptors, 1-12, 2002; Illinois Snapshots of Early Literacy – K/1 ISEL-K/1 Technical Manual* (DRAFT), Winter 2004; *Illinois Standards Achievement Test Sample Writing Handbooks, 3, 5, 8, & 10*, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003

This review covers the state's 1997 English language arts standards and its 2003 Reading, Writing, and Research Assessment Frameworks. The 1997 document presents

standards for early and late elementary, middle school, and early and late high school. The new assessment frameworks present standards for assessment in reading and writing grade by grade from grades 3 to 8. Both sets of standards are clear, specific, and measurable. They are coherently organized, with subcategories that articulate meaningful increases in academic expectations over the grades. Benchmarks are included for vocabulary development from the middle grades on, and almost all areas of the English language arts and reading are addressed adequately, if not very well, at all educational levels. The standards also specify the study of American literature in the high school grades.

Illinois	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**15**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**12**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**18**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-1**
Total:	**68**
Final GPA:	**3.09**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**B**

However, without standards pointing to key authors, texts, literary periods, and literary traditions that serve to outline the substantive as well as formal content of the secondary school English curriculum, it is not possible for these standards to lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all Illinois students. Indeed, they are more likely to lead to inequities in the different ways in which teachers and assessors interpret them. Illinois needs to craft some content-rich and content-specific standards, drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—that outline the substantive content of the English curriculum from grade 7 to grade 12. It should also provide some selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers might draw for their core classroom curriculum. These standards and lists should be used to guide state assessments, the state's regulations for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English in its institutions of higher education, and professional development activities for English teachers, teachers of English language learners, elementary teachers, and special education teachers.

Indiana

Reviewed: *ISTEP+ Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress—Plus, Program Manual*, 2003-2004, Sept. 29, 2003; *ASAP English/Language Arts Standards, K-12*, June 23, 2000; *Indiana Reading List, K-12; K-2 Reading Assessments*

Indiana	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**20**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**12**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**26**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**19**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**0**
Total:	**77**
Final GPA:	**3.50**
Final 2005 Grade:	**A**
*2000 Grade:	**D**

The review covers the 2000 Indiana standards. This is a strong document in almost every respect. Standards are presented grade by grade from K to 12 in coherent categories covering all areas well, and covering most extremely well. Overall, the standards are clear, measurable, and of increasing difficulty from grade to grade. There is an explicit section on decoding and word recognition in the early grades. The document also illustrates literary and other standards with titles and an activity using the work and provides a suggested list of titles at four educational levels illustrating quality and complexity for a level. Study of American literature is expected explicitly, and American literature is described inclusively, with illustrative authors and titles.

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

To further strengthen this fine document, Indiana needs to craft more content-rich and content-specific standards that point specifically to a group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions, drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—outlining the essential substantive content of the high school English curriculum from grade 7 to grade 12. Indiana should use these standards and its excellent reading list to guide state assessments, the regulations for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English in state institutions of higher education, and state- or federally funded professional development activities for English teachers, teachers of English language learners, elementary teachers, and special education teachers.

Kansas

Reviewed: *Reading Standards, K-12 and Scope and Sequence Indicators*, Approved July 8, 2003; *Curricular Standards for Listening, Viewing, Speaking and related Research & Technology*, January 2000; *Curricular Standards for Writing DRAFT, K-12*, May 2004; *Six Trait Rubrics; Six Trait Writing Trainers Database; Kansas Curricular Standards for Writing Draft; Reading Links; Text Types*

Kansas	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**8**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**11**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**16**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**13**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-6**
Total:	**42**
Final GPA:	**1.91**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**D**

This review addresses a 2003 revision of Kansas' English language arts and reading standards. This document is an improvement over previous documents in several respects. The document provides grade by grade benchmarks for K-8 (but still only one set of benchmarks for the four high school grades). Overall, the standards are clear and measurable. Standards are grouped in four coherent categories—reading, literature, writing, and research—with systematic instruction in decoding skills spelled out as such in the primary grades, including the use of appropriate practice materials (decodable texts). Most areas of the language arts and reading are covered well. The document also contains a good vocabulary strand through the grades.

Kansas' standards still have serious limitations, however, and as written are unlikely to lead to uniformly high expectations for all students in the state. First, many indicators are academically weak and fail to show much meaningful increase in intellectual difficulty over the grades. Thus, the lack of differentiation from grades 9-10 to grades 11-12 prevents the document from showing the vast differences in expectations that should take place from grade 9 to grade 12. Second, they fail to specify a group of culturally and historically significant works, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language, drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—that outline the essential content of the secondary school English curriculum from grade 7 to grade 12. For each standard and grade level, the state has provided "Knowledge Base Indicators" and numerous instructional examples, but these examples focus only on instructional strategies rather than specific texts or authors, thus depriving teachers of useful pedagogical models and test developers of useful guidelines.

Kansas can strengthen its standards in a number of ways. To promote equity through uniformly high expectations, it needs to craft a group of strong, content-rich and content-specific standards that point to key works, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions outlining the substantive content of the English curriculum and showing what kind of intellectual effort is ultimately required of students by graduation. Kansas should also construct selective lists of authors and works for each grade level, and for each high school grade level, from which teachers can choose for constructing the common core of their classroom curriculum. The state might further use these literature standards and lists to guide state assessments, the regulations for approving

training programs for prospective teachers of English in state institutions of higher education, and state- or federally funded professional development activities for English teachers, teachers of English language learners, elementary teachers, and special education teachers.

Kentucky

Reviewed: *Transformations Volume I and II—Kentucky's Curriculum Framework; The Kentucky Core Content Test Blueprint (version 3.0)—Reading and Writing*, September 1999; *Program of Studies—Primary English/Language Arts; Core Content—Vertical Alignment; Student Performance Standards, Grades 4, 7, & 10*, Approved June 2001; *Student Performance Standards: Writing*, Approved June 2001

Kentucky	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	5
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	11
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	12
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	16
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-5
Total:	39
Final GPA:	1.77
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	D

This review addresses Kentucky documents dated from 1999 on. Standards are presented grade by grade from grades 3 to 10 for reading, while the core content for writing assessments is spelled out for spans of differing numbers of grades. The core content in reading is grouped into five categories: reading skills and four kinds of reading—literary, persuasive, informational, and functional. The criteria and rubrics for assessing writing seem to be the standards for writing, in addition to the core content for the writing assessments. These are divided into reflective, personal, literary, and transactive writing. Reading skills are very succinctly and well presented in charts for different types of reading.

The major limitations of these documents concern the content of literary study. The literary content for the reading assessment indicates that it will include "a variety of reading materials from different cultures and time periods," leaving it unclear as to whether American literature will be taught at all (despite all the fine Kentucky authors). What is basically missing is the substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum. Moreover, while examples in the reading standards and characteristics of different types of writing show some increases in difficulty over the grades, they are not sufficient to suggest how meaningful the increases in reading complexity or difficulty are.

Kentucky could strengthen its academic expectations for all its students and promote equity across school districts by crafting some strong, content-rich and content-specific standards, drawn from classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—to outline the essential substantive content of the secondary English curriculum from grade 7 to grade 12 and to show what kind of intellectual effort in reading is required by graduation. Kentucky might also develop some lists of historically and culturally significant authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers could choose for constructing the common core of the classroom curriculum. The state could then use these literature standards and lists to guide state assessments, the regulations for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English in state institutions of higher education, and state- or federally funded professional development activities for English teachers, teachers of English language learners, elementary teachers, and special education teachers.

Louisiana

Reviewed: *Louisiana English Language Arts Content Standards, State Standards on Curriculum Development,* revised March 2004; *Division of Student Standards and Assessments: Grade-Level Expectations—English Language Arts, preK-12; Teacher's Guide to Statewide Assessment, Grades 4, 8, and 10 English Language Arts*, revised June 2000; *Reading Programs LEAP 21 Tutoring Lessons—4th Grade English Language Arts; LEAP 21 Tutoring Lessons—8th Grade English Language Arts*

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Louisiana	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	21
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	11
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	26
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	22
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-1
Total:	79
Final GPA:	3.59
Final 2005 Grade:	A
*2000 Grade:	B

This review covers Louisiana's 2004 content standards and its 2004 grade level expectations. Its standards and expectations are strong in all areas, and its standards for literature are among the very best in the country. Its standards and expectations are clear, specific, measurable, and comprehensive. The grade level expectations provide strong objectives for beginning reading instruction and require explicit study of American literature in the high school grades with respect to literary periods, various ethnic groups, and recurrent themes. According to the LEAP Test Design, literary passages are more prevalent (and thus weighted more) than other kinds of passages at the secondary school level.

The grade-level expectations contain an outstanding strand for literary devices showing the hand of well trained English teachers in crafting these expectations. They also contain literary specifics at the high school level to outline the substantive content of the high school English curriculum. In grade 9, students are, among other things, to "identify and explain connections between historical contexts and works of various authors, including Homer, Sophocles, and Shakespeare" and "analyze in oral and written responses distinctive elements (including theme, structure, and characterization) of a variety of literary forms and types, including: essays by early and modern writers; epic poetry such as *The Odyssey*; forms of lyric and narrative poetry such as ballads and sonnets; drama, including ancient, Renaissance, and modern; short stories and novels; and biographies and autobiographies." In grade 10, students are, among other things, to "analyze, in oral and written responses, distinctive elements, including theme and structure, of literary forms and types, including: essays by early and modern writers; lyric, narrative, and dramatic poetry; drama, including ancient, Renaissance, and modern; short stories, novellas, and novels; biographies and autobiographies; speeches." They are also to "analyze connections between historical contexts and the works of authors, including Sophocles and Shakespeare." In grades 11 and 12, students are, among other things, to "demonstrate understanding…in American, British, and world literature…for example: …comparing and contrasting major periods, themes, styles, and trends within and across texts" and "analyze and explain the significance of literary forms, techniques, characteristics, and recurrent themes of major literary periods in ancient, American, British, or world literature." States with impoverished literature standards might profitably examine Louisiana's new grade-level expectations.

Louisiana might strengthen its own grade-level expectations by providing selective lists of literary and non-literary works for teachers to draw upon at each secondary grade level. These lists would also be useful for suggesting the quality and quantity of independent reading Louisiana expects of students through the grades.

Maine

Reviewed: *English Language Arts*, July 1997; *English Language Arts: Reading Item Information, Content Standards, Scoring Guides, Training Notes, and Student Examples*, December 2000; *English Language Arts Assessment Inventory, revised June 9, 2004; Performance Level Guide—Elementary*, 1998-99 School Year; 1998-99 *Elementary-Level Released English Language Arts Writing Prompt*

This review is based on Maine's 1997 document and its 2004 grade-level expectations in reading. The standards document has a reasonable organizational scheme (which is maintained in its grade-level expectations)

and addresses most areas of the English language arts and reading satisfactorily at the grade levels for which it provides standards. Most standards are clear, specific, and measurable. Maine also expects study of the history of the English language and the differences between informal and formal uses of the language.

Maine	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	14
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	5
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	23
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	14
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-2
Total:	54
Final GPA:	2.45
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	B

However, Maine's average for its ratings on the 2005 review is lower than its average for its ratings on the 2000 review. That is because the ratings for the 2005 review were stricter on a number of criteria, especially those relating to the organization of a state's standards, the quality of a state's standards, their intellectual demands, and the literary specifics a state provides to point to the substantive content of its English curriculum.

Maine's standards are presented in spans of two to four grade levels, with only one set of standards for grades 5-8 and one set for grades 9-12. These broad spans are no longer adequate for standards documents, which is why Maine needed to craft grade-level expectations in reading for grades 3-8 to meet NCLB requirements. Finer distinctions in intellectual demands need to be made for the secondary grades especially, with objectives listed in informative subcategories. Because its new grade-level expectations are only for grades 3 to 8, Maine still needs to set forth clear expectations for systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and decoding skills; explicit objectives on vocabulary development over the grades (which, unfortunately, were not crafted for the new grade level expectations in reading); better intellectual progressions in its standards over the grades for all its standards; and, above all, literary and cultural specifics in the secondary grades. Without the specification of a group of key works, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language in some content-rich and content-specific standards to outline the substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum, these standards cannot lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the state. Indeed, they are more likely to lead to inequities in the different ways teachers and test developers interpret them. The standards could, for example, indicate titles of works by recognized authors who were born in or wrote about Maine, as well as biographical selections of important figures in United States and Maine history from Maine, with a selective list in an appendix, pegged to appropriate grade levels, to provide more specific guidance to teachers and test developers.

Maryland

Reviewed: *Voluntary State Curriculum: English Language Arts* (DRAFT), PreK-10, August 28, 2003; *Maryland Summary of its English Language Arts and Reading Standards; Language Arts/Core Learning Goals/Clarification Documents Goal 1-4; Reading/English Language Arts Instructional Strategies Guide for Independent Reading; Sample Plan; What do exemplary responses look like?; English Language Arts Student Monitoring Plan; Rubric: English Brief Constructed Response; What does MSA look like? Public Release Items and Student Responses; How is MSA scored?; High School Assessment, English Assessment, 2000, 2001, 2002, & 2003*

This review covers the 2003 draft of Maryland's *Voluntary State Curriculum for English Language Arts*, with standards outlined for grades PreK through 8 and grade 10. The standards are grouped in coherent strands and address general reading processes, general reading comprehension, comprehension of informational text, comprehension of literary text, writing, listening, and speaking. Almost all areas are addressed well. Overall, the standards are clear and measurable and show increasing difficulty over the grades. Details are given for systematic instruction in decoding independent of

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

contextual approaches, and there is a good strand on vocabulary development through the grades.

Maryland	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	13
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	11
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	23
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	12
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-5
Total:	54
Final GPA:	2.45
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	B

Nonetheless, there are several areas of weakness in this draft. At present, research skills and processes are referenced within the writing standards but are underdeveloped; they should be developed further, perhaps in a strand of their own. Second, the grade 10 standards and objectives in many cases are not sufficiently different from those in grade 8. They need to be much more intellectually challenging than those in grade 8. Third, the standards and objectives lack any specifics that point to the substantive content of the secondary school curriculum and its level of academic demand.

Maryland's average in 2005 is lower than its average in the 2000 review. Most of the decline can be attributed to the ratings in the first section on purposes and expectations, particularly those addressing cultural markers. In 2005, there is no mention of American literature as a body of literature students should study, no mention of participation in American civic life as a purpose for literacy skills, and no indication of the quality of independent reading expected of students. In addition, there seems to be little addressing the history of the English language.

Maryland could strengthen its standards considerably by clarifying its expectations in the key areas of reading and literature. Above all, it should craft some content-rich and content-specific standards specifying a group of key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language that outline the essential substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum. It also needs to develop more than one set of standards for the high school level—at least one set for grades 9-10 and another for 11-12. The department of education indicates that it intends to include sample lessons in its final form. One hopes that these lessons will include both specific texts and samples of student work at each grade level assessed, and for each grade (or span of two grades) in the high school. Without some literary specifics pointing to historically and culturally significant authors and works to concretize intellectual demands in the secondary school grades, these standards are unlikely to lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the state.

Massachusetts**

Reviewed: *Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework*, June 2001; Release of Spring 2003 Test Items, August 2003

Massachusetts	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	23
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	12
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	28
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	23
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-0
Total:	86
Final GPA:	3.91
Final 2005 Grade:	A
*2000 Grade:	B

This review covers the 2001 English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. The standards in this document are presented in two-year grade spans, but supplementary standards have recently been created for grades

3, 5, and 7. The standards address all areas in the English language arts and reading coherently, contain clear expectations for explicit and systematic phonics instruction in the primary grades, and provide for a strong vocabulary strand through the grades. Regulations for teacher training programs and licensure are aligned to the state's K-12 standards, as are the subject matter knowledge tests for teachers.

To make the level of intellectual demand clear at each grade level, the document provides specific titles and descriptions of classroom activities as examples for many of its standards. It also provides two core lists, consisting chiefly of authors, each in a separate appendix and divided into broad educational levels (PreK-2, 3-4, 5-8, 9-12). One list contains suggested authors, illustrators, and works reflecting this country's literary and cultural heritage; the other list identifies authors of contemporary and world literature. The document recommends that classroom programs draw equally from both lists. To support this recommendation, literary passages selected for state assessments are drawn equally from both lists. In addition, to approximate the content of the typical English class, as recommended by teacher committees, 60 percent of the passages on state assessments are literary and 40 percent are informational, at all grade levels.

However, works by the authors at each educational level (PreK-2, 3-4, etc.) range considerably in reading level. Moreover, while lists of key authors or works in two appendices broadly outline the substantive content of the English curriculum through the grades, the standards themselves do not include such specifics. There are also only a few content-rich standards in the document (e.g., in grade 10, students are to "analyze the characters, structure, and themes of classical Greek drama and epic poetry").

This document could be strengthened by the crafting of more content-rich as well as content-specific standards in the Reading and Literature strand. These would serve to outline more clearly the substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum from grade 7 to grade 12, and to provide clearer guidance for state assessments.

** *I must note that I was co-chair of the 12-member committee appointed by the Massachusetts Board of Education and the Massachusetts Commissioner of Education that prepared the 1997 Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. In 2001, I was senior associate commissioner in the Massachusetts Department of Education in charge of the revision of the 1997 document. Because of my involvement in drafting the Massachusetts standards, my co-rater, Carol Jago, an English teacher in the Santa Monica, California schools and editor of the* California English Journal*, independently reviewed the 2001 Massachusetts English Language Arts Curriculum Framework. Her review can be found online at www.excellence.net.*

Michigan

Reviewed: *Michigan Curriculum Framework*, 1996; *English Language Arts Grade Level Content Expectations*, K-8, 2002

Michigan	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**7**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**9**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**18**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**8**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-11**
Total:	**31**
Final GPA:	**1.41**
Final 2005 Grade:	**D**
*2000 Grade:	**F**

This review covers the 1996 Content Standards and the 2002 K-8 Grade Level Content Expectations. The newer grade-level expectations address many of the limitations of the 1996 document but do not go nearly far enough to eliminate all of them. Overall, the standards are presented grade by grade from K to 8; the grade-level expectations are organized into four coherent strands: Reading (with literary and non-literary reading distinguished), Writing, Speaking, and Listening and Viewing. The standards seem to expect students to be able to understand and use decoding skills independent of contextual approaches; and they offer a good vocabulary strand through grade 8.

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

However, a large number of standards in both documents are not clear, specific, or measurable. They are often vague, obscure, or pretentious statements. For example, students are expected to "demonstrate their ability to use different voices in their oral and written communication to persuade, inform, entertain, and inspire their audiences," "evaluate the power of using multiple voices…," and "analyze how cultures interact with one another in literature and other texts, and describe the consequences of the interaction as it relates to our common heritage." Moreover, although reading, interpreting, and critically evaluating literature are addressed more clearly in the 2002 grade level expectations than in the 1996 document, poetry and dramatic literature are not well addressed in either document, possibly because they are classified under "Narrative Text," where a literary scholar would be unlikely to place them. The most serious content deficiency is the lack of a key group of authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions to outline the essential substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum.

Michigan can strengthen its standards considerably first by providing more than one set of standards at the high school level, as is now the case in the 1996 document, preferably one for each grade level from grades 9 to 12. Additionally, the state should extend use of the four strands found in its new grade-level expectations into an organizing framework for all standards. It should also classify the major types of literary texts in the way they are classified by literary scholars. Above all, it should revise or eliminate the incomprehensible and/or unteachable standards in both documents. In their place, the Great Lakes State should invite a group of experienced and well-trained high school English teachers to craft some content-rich and content-specific standards designating a group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, periods, and traditions that make clear the essential substantive content of the English curriculum in grades 7 to 12 and show what kind of intellectual effort is ultimately required in reading and writing by graduation. The state might further use these literature standards to guide its assessments, its professional development activities, and its criteria for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English.

Minnesota

Reviewed: *Minnesota Academic Standards: Language Arts K-12*, May 19, 2003; *Alignment of Minnesota Early Learning Standards with State K-12 Standards*, Working Draft September 2003; *Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment*—Sample Tests/Practice Tests

Minnesota	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**14**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**11**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**20**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**0**
Total:	**69**
Final GPA:	**3.14**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**D**

A dramatic improvement over the state's previous standards, Minnesota's 2003 standards are presented grade by grade from K-8, with one set for grades 9-12. Overall, the 2003 standards are clear, measurable, and of increasing difficulty over the grades. They are grouped in categories that reflect coherent bodies of research: writing, reading and literature (with informational and functional reading separated from literary reading), and speaking, listening, and viewing. Almost all areas in the English language arts and reading are addressed well, several very well. There is a distinct vocabulary strand over the grades, systematic instruction in decoding skills is expected, and the high school standards expect students to understand and explain the various types of logical fallacies that can be discerned in informational texts. Study of American literature is mentioned at almost every grade level, as is study of a variety of different genres and traditional, classical, and contemporary works of literary merit.

Yet the literature and reading standards outline only the formal demands of the English curriculum. No cultur-

ally or historically significant authors, works, literary periods, or literary traditions in American or other bodies of literature are spelled out. In other words, what is missing is an outline of the substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum—fiction, poetry, drama, and literary and non-literary non-fiction. Additionally, though the Draft Test Specifications suggest DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) readability ranges and averages for each grade level for fiction and nonfiction, the standards/benchmarks themselves contain no such indices of reading level or literary quality.

In order to promote equity and uniformly high academic expectations for all students by grade 12, Minnesota needs to do several things. First, it should provide more than one set of standards for grades 9-12, preferably one set per grade. Second, it should craft a group of content-rich and content-specific standards at each grade level pointing to key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions that serve to outline the essential substantive content of the high school English curriculum. Third, it should develop selective lists of authors and/or titles of culturally and historically significant literary and non-literary works to accompany each grade level, from which teachers might draw to construct the core of their classroom curriculum. These new literature standards and lists should be used to guide its student assessments, its professional development programs for teachers, its criteria for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English, and its subject matter knowledge tests for prospective English and elementary teachers.

Mississippi

Reviewed: *Mississippi Language Arts Framework 2000, K-12; Reading Instructional Intervention Supplement* (Benchmarks, Informal Assessments, Strategies) Grade K-3, 1998; *Reading Instructional Intervention Supplement* (Benchmarks, Informal Assessments, Strategies) Grade 4-8, 1999; *Writing Instructional Intervention Supplement, Grades K-3*, 2002; *Writing Instructional Intervention Supplement* (Benchmarks, Informal Assessments, Strategies) Grades 4-8, 2002; *Instructional Intervention Guide English II*, 2001; *Mississippi Dyslexia Handbook Guidelines and Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders*, 2002; *Writing for the State Assessments*, revised 2004; *Language Arts Courses, K-12; Chart of Scope and Sequence Continuum of Competencies*; Appendix V-VIII: Reading/Writing Instructional Intervention Supplement, K-3 & 4-8; *Sample Standardize Curriculum Format*, 2000

Mississippi	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**13**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**10**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**20**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-5**
Total:	**62**
Final GPA:	**2.82**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

Mississippi's new *Supplements* (listed above) are extremely well organized and readable and address many of the limitations in the 1996 and 2000 standards documents. Grade-level expectations for writing through grade 8 are now addressed thoroughly. The *Supplements* clearly specify phonics instruction (although it is not clear that instruction will be systematic), cover vocabulary study extremely well, address literary elements and techniques well, and are generally clear, specific, and measurable. Literary study is reasonably well covered at the high school level. Moreover, the literature objectives are frequently accompanied by examples of strategies for teaching literature that specify particular high-quality literary works. This feature also helps suggest an expected reading level for a grade.

However, for writing, there doesn't seem to be much difference in the suggested demands from the middle grades to grade 10, and there is no writing supplement for grades 9-12. Most important, although there are literary specifics in suggested teaching strategies, no specifics are provided in the standards themselves. Moreover, the examples provided in the suggested

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teaching strategies suggest much higher expectations than do the competencies and objectives contained in the standards. The expectations and supplements also include many negative criteria that detract from the overall quality of Mississippi's standards. For example, the reading and literature standards expect students to relate what they read to their life experiences and the grade 11 standards expect students to "read to associate literary experiences with contemporary issues, such as those dealing with religion, politics, government, economics, etc." (One may fairly ask whether these are standards for English or social studies.) Further, the objectives under each competency in the *Language Arts Framework* are not well organized according to higher- and lower-order skills.

Mississippi could strengthen its standards and show uniformly high academic expectations for all its students by graduation by crafting content-rich and content-specific standards for the high school English curriculum based on its extraordinarily rich elective course on Mississippi writers. This gem of a course focuses on all nationally known black and white writers born in Mississippi, whether or not all of their writings were about the state. The grade 8 and high school reading tests might even be based on excerpts from those writers' works. The state might further use these literature standards to guide criteria for approving preparation programs for prospective English teachers and to inform its professional development activities for English teachers, teachers of English language learners, elementary teachers, and special education teachers.

Missouri

Reviewed: *Missouri's Framework for Curriculum Development in Communication Arts*, K-12, 1996; *Communication Arts Grade-Level Expectations DRAFT*, February 2004; *Achievement Level Descriptors, 3, 7, & 11*, revised Jan. 14, 2004; *Assessment Annotations for the Curriculum Frameworks Communication Arts*, Grades 3, 7, 11; *Performance Standards: Overview, Goal 1-4*, Jan. 18, 1996; *Missouri's Framework for Curriculum Development in Communication Arts*, K-12; *CA Released Items*, 2003, 2002, 2001, 2000, 1999

Missouri	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	13
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	9
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	21
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	14
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-5
Total:	52
Final GPA:	2.36
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	D

Missouri's new *Communication Arts Grade-Level Expectations* offers grade-by-grade standards for K-8, with one set for grades 9 to 12. Overall these grade-level expectations are clearly written and measurable. Speaking and listening skills are extremely well addressed to support one of the state's praiseworthy goals for the English language arts and reading curriculum: to prepare students for informed participation in American civic life. The document also contains an excellent set of standards for beginning reading.

Unfortunately, the standards lack a strong vocabulary strand through the grades and do not require systematic coverage of the diverse literary elements and devices specific to the major categories of imaginative literature: fiction, poetry, and dramatic literature. Indeed, the latter is almost totally ignored. Literary study, the heart of the high school English curriculum, is very inadequately addressed in these documents, and the high school expectations for literary (and non-literary) reading do not point to key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions from classical, American, and British literature that serve to outline the substantive content of the English curriculum and provide a clear basis for demanding classroom assignments. Additionally, except for the study of grammar, the standards do not address the nature, dynamics, and history of the English language.

Missouri could strengthen its standards considerably first by working out a strong vocabulary strand from

kindergarten through senior year. It also needs to include more than one set of standards for grades 9 through 12; a single set of standards at this level is not adequate for showing the vast changes in intellectual growth that take place in high school. Above all, the Show Me State needs standards that outline the essential substantive content of the English curriculum from grades 7 through 12, as well as grade-specific lists of authors and/or titles from which teachers could draw to construct their core classroom curriculum. For example, Missouri could require students at appropriate grade levels to read works by writers born in Missouri or who wrote about Missouri (e.g., Mark Twain) as well as selections about or by well-known figures in U.S. history who came from Missouri (e.g., Harry S. Truman). Perhaps Missouri could also invite some of its experienced and well-trained high school English teachers to craft content-rich and content-specific standards designating a group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, periods, and traditions that make clear the content of the English curriculum in grades 7 through 12 and show what kind of intellectual effort in reading and writing is required by graduation. The state might further use these literature standards to guide its assessments, its criteria for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English, its tests of subject matter knowledge required for prospective English and elementary teachers, and its professional development activities for English teachers, teachers of English language learners, elementary teachers, and special education teachers.

Montana

Reviewed: *Montana Standards for Reading*, September 2000; *Montana Standards for Literature*, October 1999; *Montana Standards for Media Literacy*, October 1999; *Montana Standards for Speaking and Listening*, October 1999; *Montana Standards for Writing*, October 1999; *Progress Towards Standards: Reading Curriculum Standards*, Updated Sept. 16, 2003; *Montana Standards and Expanded Benchmarks for Reading; Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS, Phase 2): Progress Towards Standards (PTS) Assessment Test*, 3-12, Sept. 3, 2003; *Montana Comprehensive Assessment System: Reading Grade level learning expectations*, 3- 8, 10 & upon graduation, August 2003

Montana	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**10**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**6**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**7**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**7**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-12**
Total:	**18**
Final GPA:	**0.82**
Final 2005 Grade:	**F**
*2000 Grade:	**F**

Overall, Montana's standards documents are very readable, and the 2003 document shows reading standards for grades 3 to 8 and for high school. Additionally, the state's standards admirably expect students to learn important reading and writing skills to "to fulfill civic and social responsibilities," to become "productive citizens in a democratic society," and to share "in our contemporary global society."

However, Montana's standards are extremely limited and underdeveloped. In general, they are insufficiently specific, comprehensive, demanding, or measurable. Moreover, good academic standards in English language arts should show intellectual increases over the grades; expect the systematic teaching of decoding skills in the primary grades; go beyond a process or strategy approach to provide clear indices of quality in writing; give some details on written language conventions over the grades; and offer a reasonable outline of the content of the secondary English curriculum. Unfortunately, standards in the Treasure State fail to do any of these things adequately.

Montana's standards need extensive revision in order to guide teachers and school districts academically and serve the cause of equity in curricular expectations throughout the state. Montana should craft some strong

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beginning reading standards that address all the elements of reading highlighted by reading research. It should also craft stronger standards addressing writing quality and a group of content-rich and content-specific literary and non-literary standards pointing to key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in classical, British, and American literature—broadly conceived—that outline the content of the secondary school English curriculum. It then needs to develop selective lists of authors and/or titles to accompany each grade level from which teachers might draw for their core classroom curriculum. In addition, these new standards and lists should be used to guide independent reading for students, state or federally funded professional development for teachers, criteria for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12, and the tests of subject matter knowledge required for prospective English and elementary teachers.

Nebraska

Review: *Nebraska Reading/Writing Standards*, Grades K-12, adopted Sept. 7, 2001; *STARS A Summary*, June 2002; STARS Update #14, March 2004; *Assessment Portfolio Instruction*, March 2004

Nebraska	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	13
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	10
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	18
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	12
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-3
Total:	50
Final GPA:	2.27
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	B

Nebraska's standards cover most areas in the English language arts and reading adequately. They expect systematic teaching of decoding skills in the early grades and contain two content-rich indicators for literary study addressing Nebraska authors and historical figures important to the state and the nation. Although they address only grades 1, 4, 8, and 12, five or six separate grade-level expectations for reading are offered in Update #14 for assessments in grades 3, 5, 6, and 7.

There are some serious limitations in these standards, however, many of them traceable to having a single four-grade span from 5 to 8 for all areas but reading, and from 9 to 12 in all areas. Explicit expectations for growth in vocabulary seem to end in grade 4. A large number of standards are not measurable; they simply indicate process rather than content or are simply unteachable, especially in the area of literary study. For example, students are expected to "use active listening, showing consideration of others' contributions to discussions," "ask for clarification when messages don't make sense," "identify purpose for reading, recall prior knowledge, and preview illustrations and headings to make predictions," "write poems of varying forms," "analyze how a literary work reflects the authors' personal history, attitudes, and/or beliefs," or "compare and contract reading selections to students' present-day lives." Many standards fail to show increasing difficulty over the grades, thus neglecting to capture the huge differences between what should be expected in grade 8 versus, say, the senior year of high school.

Nebraska's average score in this review is considerably lower than in 2000. This is due in large part to a stricter rating in 2005 on many criteria, such as those addressing mention of American literature as a body of literature, the grade-level organization of standards, and coverage of various areas. In general, Nebraska's revision of its standards and objectives did not strengthen what it had in the previous documents—and in some cases (in literary study), it weakened them.

It is important to note that Nebraska's state standards are meant to serve only as a guide for local communities, which are free to draft their own standards as long as they are equal to or more rigorous than the state's. Unfortunately, this approach to standards cannot create uniformly high academic expectations for all Nebraska students until local districts are required to indicate to the state more specific information about their own local standards, including a group of key titles, authors,

literary periods, and literary traditions drawn from classical, British, and American literature, inclusively conceived, that serve to outline the essential content of their secondary English curricula and that indicate the level of difficulty and the quality of what local districts expect in each grade from 8 to 12. The state's standards could be more useful to local districts if a committee of experienced English teachers drew up a selective list of authors and titles for each grade—addressing the two content-rich indicators in this document—and if local districts were expected to draw upon that list each year for some of the passages on their assessments. These steps would help to assure a measure of equity in academic expectations for all Nebraska students.

Nevada

Reviewed: *Nevada English Language Arts: Content Standards*, adopted March 2001 (Feb. 21, 2003 Edition); *Performance Level Descriptors English/Language Arts*, 2, 3, *5, 8, & 12*

Nevada	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**10**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**11**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**17**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-1**
Total:	**61**
Final GPA:	**2.77**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**B**

Overall, Nevada's standards have many strengths. They provide grade-by-grade standards from K to 8, with another set for grade 12. All categories reflect coherent bodies of scholarship: reading (with separate standards for non-literary and literary reading), writing, listening and speaking, and research. Most of the standards are well written, concise, and measurable. They also show increasing levels of difficulty over the grades. All areas of the English language arts and reading are addressed extremely well, especially the strands on research and language conventions. In addition, the reading strand contains an excellent vocabulary section over the grades, and the document makes clear its expectation for systematic instruction in phonics. The *Performance Level Descriptors* also specify what students should know and be able to do to achieve at one of four levels: exceeds standard, meets standard, approaches standard, below standard.

However, Nevada's literature standards lack any cultural or historical specifics, and they contain a group of indicators on the use of historical/cultural contexts that are unintelligible or generally impossible to teach in K-12. Additionally, the standards do not clearly address the nature, dynamics, and history of the English language, nor do they index or illustrate growth through the grades—both essential elements of first-rate state standards.

To strengthen its standards, Nevada should craft content-rich and content-specific standards pointing to culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions drawn from classical, British, and American literature—inclusively conceived—that outline the essential content of the English curriculum in the secondary grades. It should also provide selective lists of authors and/or titles accompanying each grade level or in an appendix. These standards and lists could be used for constructing the common core of classroom curricula and state assessments, for guiding independent student reading, and for approving training programs for prospective English teachers.

New Hampshire

Reviewed: *English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, K-12; Toward an Engaged Literacy: 7-12 Addendum to the New Hampshire K-12 English Language Arts Framework*, December 1999; *Tri-State New England (TSNE) Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for Reading in Grades 2-5*, February 2004; *Tri-State New England (TSNE) Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for Reading in Grades 5-8*, February 2004; *Draft Test Specifications Tri-State New England (TSNE) Reading Assessment*, December 2003; *Tri-State New England (TSNE)*

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for Writing in Grades 3-8, Feb. 2004; *Draft Test Specifications Tri-State New England (TSNE) Writing Assessment, December 2003*; Released Test Items, 3, 6, & 10

New Hampshire	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**18**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**9**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**20**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**17**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-0**
Total:	**64**
Final GPA:	**2.91**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

This review covers New Hampshire's 1995 and 1997 standards and the December 2003 draft of the *Tri-State New England Grade Level Expectations for Reading and Writing*. Although the 1995 and 1997 standards are for three broad grade spans (K-3, 4-6, and 7-10), the grade-level expectations are for each grade in 2 through 8 in reading, and for each grade in 3 through 8 in writing. These new grade-level expectations (developed for use by Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont) are excellent; they show how small states can jointly create fine standards that might be difficult for each to create individually, while also providing uniform expectations across a region.

Grade level expectations for literary study for grades 2 to 8 contain fine objectives, and a few sample titles are offered for grades 3 to 8 to show levels of complexity. In its high school standards, New Hampshire laudably expects students to study classical and contemporary American and British literature, as well as literary works translated into English, Pulitzer and Nobel prize-winners, writing by local and regional authors, and books receiving Newbery and Caldecott awards. But while the state describes types of literature, it does not provide any lists of prize-winning books or authors or indicate specific literary periods and literary traditions to be studied to make clear what the essential content of the literature curriculum should be.

To strengthen its standards at the high school level and show increasing complexity by grade 12, the Granite State needs to provide more than one set of standards for grades 9 to 12, preferably one per grade. It should then craft standards that offer illustrative titles and authors for the categories described above. It might also develop some selective lists of authors and/or titles from which teachers might draw for their core classroom curriculum. As a beginning, the document could follow up on its standard suggesting the reading of works by local and regional authors by providing a selective list of such works in an appendix, divided into grade levels. This would give some guidance about the level of intellectual demand expected at each grade. These standards and lists could also be used in state assessments for students and prospective English and elementary teachers and as criteria for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English and elementary school.

New Jersey

Reviewed: *New Jersey Language Arts Literacy Curriculum Framework*, Fall 1998; *Test Specifications: Directory of Test Specifications and Sample Items for ESPA, GEPA and HSPA in Language Arts Literacy; Core Curriculum Content Standards*, April 7, 2004

New Jersey's standards, updated in April 2004, are somewhat stronger than the state's earlier versions. They are now presented grade by grade from K to 8, with another set for high school. They also address almost all areas in the English language arts adequately and tend to be clear and measurable and show reasonable increases in difficulty from K to 8. The beginning reading standards are strong, clear, and thorough and have the potential to lead to solid state assessments at the elementary school level.

However, one set of standards for grades 9 to 12 is inadequate for capturing the large differences in intellectual growth across that four-year span. Moreover, the high school standards are still inadequate—vague, verbose,

and poorly written, especially those that were also in the original *New Jersey Language Arts Curriculum Framework*. Nowhere do the standards acknowledge the existence of a corpus of literary works called American literature; literary reading is mixed with non-literary reading throughout; and the different objectives for the study of fiction, poetry, and drama are not clearly distinguished or well developed. There are still no content-rich or content-specific literature standards pointing to a group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions to outline the essential substantive content of the high school English curriculum.

New Jersey	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**10**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**9**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**19**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**10**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-6**
Total:	**42**
Final GPA:	**1.91**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**D**

The Garden State could strengthen its standards considerably by crafting some content-rich and content-specific literary standards pointing to key works, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions from classical, British, and American literature—inclusively conceived—to outline the essential substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum. It should also provide selective lists of authors and titles accompanying each grade level or in an appendix. These standards and lists could be used by teachers to construct the core of their classroom curriculum and to guide independent student reading, as well as by the state in developing assessments for students and prospective English and elementary teachers and approving training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12 in its institutions of higher education.

New Mexico

Reviewed: *New Mexico Curriculum Framework: Language Arts,* adopted June 16, 2000; *New Mexico High School Standards Assessment (NMHSSA) Test and Item Specifications*, March 17, 2003; *District Test Coordinator Training Site; Benchmark*, Performance Standards Addressed, Corresponding Item and Test Specs

New Mexico	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**14**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**5**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**21**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**4**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-9**
Total:	**35**
Final GPA:	**1.59**
Final 2005 Grade:	**D**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

New Mexico's standards have many positive features including the expectation of systematic instruction in decoding skills in the primary grades and benchmarks addressing all areas of the English language arts and reading, with most areas covered adequately. It also has a fine set of guiding principles.

However, too many standards are unintelligible and not measurable. For example, in first grade students are expected to "describe events related to other nations and/or cultures," in grade 11 to "analyze the clarity and consistency of literary works or essays on a topic," in grade 6 to "recognize the point of view of the author by considering alternative points of view or reasons by remaining fair-minded and open to other interpretations," and in grade 8 to "describe how tone and meaning is conveyed in poetry and expository writing through word choice, figurative language, sentence structure, line length, punctuation, rhythm, repetition , and rhyme." Additionally, New Mexico's standards are grouped in muddled categories: reading and listening;

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writing and speaking; and literature and media. The first category addresses both literary and non-literary reading in many of its performance standards, and those standards are presented in subcategories that are not clearly labeled or sorted out. As a result, the standards do not show clear increases in difficulty over the grades. To remedy this problem, the standards need to be organized in coherent subcategories first, weeded to eliminate non-standards or undoable or unintelligible standards, and then drastically edited by people who understand what an academic standard is (whether a content or performance standard). The benchmarks should be removed altogether as they are superfluous and distract from, rather than facilitate, understanding.

Literary study is shabbily dealt with in these standards. It is treated instrumentally, as a means to study something English teachers are not trained to teach (world cultures), rather than as a discipline that English teachers are properly expected to teach (the study of literary texts). In effect, the document expects English teachers to turn their classes into pseudo-social science classes and pretend to be anthropologists and sociologists. Worse yet, literary study has been combined with the study of media, thus further reducing the time for it. As written, New Mexico's standards cannot lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the Land of Enchantment.

New Mexico should not only improve the organization of the standards, as explained above, but should also draw upon well-trained and experienced high school English teachers to craft a distinct group of content-rich and content-specific standards that point to a group of authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions drawn from classical, British, and American literature—inclusively conceived—and that serve to outline the substantive content of the secondary English curriculum from grades 7 to 12. New Mexico should also draw up selective reading lists of authors and titles to accompany each grade level or to be placed in an appendix. These standards and lists could be used by teachers for constructing the common core of their classroom curriculum and for guiding independent student reading, as well as by state education department staff when approving training programs and subject matter knowledge tests for prospective English and elementary teachers.

New York

Reviewed: *Learning Standards for New York State; Learning Standards for English Language Arts*, Revised Edition March 1996; *English Language Arts: Resource Guide Learning Standards; English Language Arts Resource Guide Instructional Materials; English Language Arts Resource Guide, 1997; Grade 4 & 8 English Language Arts Item Map*, 2004; *English Language Arts Resource Guide – Core Curriculum; Early Literacy Profile: An Assessment Profile Part 1; Early Literacy Profile: An Assessment Profile Part 2; Student Work; Closing the Gap—Teacher to Teacher: Instructional Units from High School English Teachers*, three installments; *Early Literacy Guidance* PreK–3; *Early Literacy Profile—Facilitator's Guide*, Part 1 & 2; *Essential Elements of Reading*; English Language Arts Regents Examinations

New York	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**14**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**8**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**22**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**21**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-3**
Total:	**62**
Final GPA:	**2.82**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

New York's standards documents have many strengths. Overall, the standards are clear, measurable, and comprehensive in almost all areas and show increasing difficulty over the grades, although having only one set of standards for grades 9-12 limits the opportunity to understand the differences in intellectual growth from grades 9-10 to 11-12. Beginning reading expectations in Early Literacy Guidance for PreK-3, on the other hand, admirably address phonemic awareness, phonics instruction, and fluency.

However, the 1998 document contains few specifics for vocabulary growth through the grades, nothing on the history and nature of the English language or the existence of a corpus of literary works called American literature, no expectation that students in the Empire State will become literate American citizens, and the anti-literary expectation that literary response at all levels "should be connected to the individual's prior knowledge and experience." Additionally, New York's standards are grouped into muddled categories that do not reflect coherent bodies of research. For example, analysis and evaluation are separated from both informational reading and response to literature, an artificial dichotomy that disserves the study of literature in particular. Further, the content and purpose of the "social-interaction standard" is confusing. There are no clear meanings for many objectives in it, no reasonable and discernable rationale for them, nor any reasonable, impartial ways to assess them. Most serious, the standards lack a specification of any key group of authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions from classical, British, and American literature—inclusively conceived—to outline the essential content of the secondary school English curriculum.

New York could considerably strengthen its standards and make them more understandable if it embedded them in an organizational scheme based on coherent bodies of research, developed specific and strong vocabulary objectives at each grade level, and provided for more than one set of standards at the high school level—perhaps one for grades 9 to 10 and another for grades 11 to 12—to better guide curriculum planning and assessments for high school courses. Above all, New York should provide some content-rich and content-specific standards addressing key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions that outline the substantive content of the English curriculum from grade 7 to 12, and that guide the construction of selective reading lists for each grade level. Such new standards and lists could be used by teachers for constructing the common core of their curriculum, as well as by state officials for approving training programs for prospective teachers of English in grades 7 to 12 and for constructing their subject matter tests for licensure.

North Carolina

Reviewed: *English Language Arts Curriculum Grades K-12*, Approved 1999; *English Language Arts Curriculum English I, II, III, IV*, Approved 1999; *English Language Arts Curriculum Resources; The North Carolina Writing Assessment at Grades 4, 7, and 10 Trainer Manual; Understanding the North Carolina Writing Assessment Scoring Model at Grades 4, 7, and 10*

North Carolina	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**20**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**8**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**22**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**18**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-1**
Total:	**67**
Final GPA:	**3.05**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**B**

Although this review is based on the same set of standards approved in 1999 and reviewed in the State of State Standards 2000, North Carolina's grade point average is slightly higher in 2005 because the review included information from its assessment blueprints and writing guides—documents that were not reviewed in 2000 and that add value to the state's standards.

Overall, these standards are clear, specific, and measurable, showing increasing difficulty over the grades and addressing almost all areas of the English language arts and reading satisfactorily. The research, conventions, and reading strands are particularly strong, with clear objectives throughout on vocabulary and reading comprehension skills. K-2 reading instruction reflects the converging research base (and may increasingly do so in the planned 2004-05 revision of this 1999 document). Decoding skills are specifically addressed as a strategy to be taught and used by students independent of using context clues. The standards also clearly expect the

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study of "world, American, and British literature," specifying literary periods in American literature. Admirably, it also offers grade-by-grade course descriptions at the high school level that distinguish among expressive, informational, argumentative, critical, and literary reading.

Yet, North Carolina's standards lack a coherent and consistent organizing scheme. The basic strands seem to be written language (reading/literature and writing), oral language, and other media/technology. However, these are confusingly mixed together in the English language arts curriculum under five competency goals, a seeming mixture of Kinneavy's aims of discourse with critical thinking skills and language conventions. More important, although the high school standards suggest ambitious intellectual demands for reading and writing in a formal sense, they contain no content-specific standards specifying key works, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions to outline the essential content of the secondary school English curriculum.

North Carolina could strengthen its standards in several ways to promote uniformly high expectations for all its students. It would benefit from a more coherent organizing scheme, with fewer but more coherent subsets in each strand. It also needs some content-rich and content-specific standards pointing to a group of works and authors from classical, British, and American literature, inclusively conceived, that serve to outline the substantive content of the secondary English curriculum, grade by grade from 7 to 12, and to provide guidance for classroom curriculum planning, independent student reading, and approval of programs preparing prospective teachers of English. It might also provide selective reading lists of authors and/or works for each grade level or in an appendix from which secondary teachers could draw from for the common core of their curriculum.

North Dakota

Reviewed: *The North Dakota Standards and Benchmarks Content Standards—DRAFT, K-12*, January 2004; *North Dakota Standards and Benchmarks Achievement Standards—English Language Arts Curriculum Framework*, 1996; *North Dakota Calibration Pack, Reading Test Grade 4*, 1998/1999; *North Dakota Calibration Pack*, Reading Grade 8 Pack A, 1998/1999; *North Dakota Calibration Pack, Reading Test Grade 12 Pack A, 1998/1999; North Dakota Calibration Pack*, 1998/1999; *North Dakota Standards and Assessment Development Protocols*, November 2002

North Dakota	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**10**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**12**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**26**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**13**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-2**
Total:	**59**
Final GPA:	**2.68**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**D**

This review is based on the most recent draft of the state's content standards for the English language arts, which is a vast improvement over North Dakota's previous standards document. Standards are presented grade by grade from K-12, and the categories within them reflect coherent bodies of scholarship. All areas of the English language arts are more than adequately covered, and the reading strand now contains very strong beginning reading standards. The standards are generally clear, specific, and measurable, showing increasing intellectual difficulty through the grades.

However, it does not appear that students in the Sioux State are expected to acquire reading, writing, and speaking skills for the purpose of becoming literate American citizens. Nor do the standards recognize the existence of a corpus of literary works called "American literature." Further, the document lacks both content-rich and content-specific literature standards to outline the essential content of the high school English curriculum as well as selective lists of authors or titles at different educational levels to guide independent reading, the construction of classroom curricula, and state assessments.

North Dakota could further strengthen its standards document by providing a group of literature standards at each grade level from 7 to 12 that point to a few culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions from classical, British, and American literature that all students should study. It could also provide lists of authors or titles grade by grade or in an appendix to suggest the quality of independent reading it expects and to illustrate desired levels of difficulty over the grades. Without a common core of substantive literature and reading standards for all students in North Dakota, its current standards are more likely to lead to inequities because of the various ways in which teachers are likely to interpret them.

Ohio

Reviewed: *Academic Content Standards K-12 English Language Arts*, adopted Dec. 11, 2001; *Academic Content Standards K-12 English Language Arts: Benchmarks and Indicators by Standards; Academic Content Standards K-12 English Language Arts: Benchmarks and Indicators by Grade-Level; English Language Arts District Alignment Tool*

Ohio	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**12**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**12**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**11**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-3**
Total:	**56**
Final GPA:	**2.55**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

The latest version of Ohio's state English language arts standards, adopted in December 2001, is a dramatic improvement over earlier iterations. Standards are now grouped in coherent categories and cover most areas of the English language arts and reading quite well. Beginning reading standards address decoding skills more specifically and clearly than they did in the original document, and there is a strong vocabulary strand through the grades that includes the history and nature of the English language. Most standards are now clear, specific, and measurable, and most clearly show increasing difficulty over the grades.

Yet, the standards still need strengthening in several specific ways, nearly all relating to the standards for literary study. First, distinctions need to be made over the grades among the three major categories of imaginative literature (fiction, poetry, and dramatic literature) with respect to their distinctive elements and devices. Second, many of the standards for literary study are vague and pretentious—"describe the thoughts, words, and interactions of characters"—or suggest that the English class may be turned into a pseudo-social studies class—"analyze the historical, social and cultural context of setting" and "analyze the characteristics of various literary periods and how the issues influenced the writers of those periods." The most serious omission is a group of content-rich and content-specific standards pointing to key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in classical, British, and American literature that outline the essential content of the secondary school English curriculum. Until these additions are made, these standards cannot lead to uniformly high expectations for all Ohio students.

A laudable grade 12 indicator expects students to "compare and contrast varying characteristics of American, British, world and multi-cultural literature." Regrettably, this standard is unteachable because there are no indicators in earlier grades that would prepare students to make such a comparison. Indeed, there is no indication that students in the Buckeye State will have read widely enough by grade 12 to be capable of making such global comparisons. To make this important grade 12 indicator real, Ohio should craft a number of content-rich and content-specific indicators from grades 6 or 7 onward that prepare students for making informed comparisons of a few key characteristics of these vast bodies of literature by senior year.

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Oklahoma

Reviewed: *Priority Academic Student Skills: Language Arts, Grades K-12*; Alignment Blueprints for the 2003-2004 Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests, *Reading: Grade 3, 4, 5, 8 and English II*; 2003-2004 Test Specifications for the Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests; *Performance Level Descriptors; Writing Test Scoring Procedures—Grades 5 & 8—*English II; Writing Test Example Papers—2001—Grade 5 & 8; 2002-2003 Test Interpretation Manuals; *Reading Sufficiency Act, Assessment for Reading 1-3*

Oklahoma	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**11**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**12**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**24**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**17**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-6**
Total:	**58**
Final GPA:	**2.64**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

Overall, Oklahoma's improved standards are clear and measurable, and they increase in difficulty over the grades. They address almost all areas of the English language arts very satisfactorily. Specifically, they are individualized from grade 1 through grade 12; the grade-level expectations in reading are clearly organized in the following strands: Print awareness, phonological /phonemic awareness, phonics/decoding, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension/critical literacy; and vocabulary study are addressed in a very strong strand through grade 12. In addition a welcome feature of these standards is that the blueprint for Oklahoma Core Curriculum Tests appears at the end of each set of grade-level standards. This kind of transparency between standards and standards-based testing is commendable—and rare.

However, although there are separate standards on phonics/decoding skills, teachers are warned explicitly in the overview not to teach any of the five components required by Reading First independently of the others and of "Comprehension/Critical Literacy." This injunction may inhibit the systematic teaching of phonics and retard students' skill in identifying words independent of contextual approaches. In addition, there is no mention of American literature in the documents reviewed, and although historically and culturally significant works are to be studied, the document never clarifies in what "culture" these works are significant. Indeed, the document implies that there are many American "cultures" rather than one inclusive national polity.

Oklahoma's standards need to be strengthened in a few areas, but above all by specifying key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in some content-rich and content-specific standards for classical, British, and American literature—inclusively conceived—that serve to outline the substantive content of the secondary English curriculum. Oklahoma should also develop selective lists of titles and/or authors, appropriately graded, appended to each grade level or placed in an appendix, from which teachers might choose for part of the school curriculum. Such lists would help to guide not only curriculum planning but also state assessments, teacher preparation, teacher licensing tests, and professional development.

Oregon

Reviewed: *Oregon English/Language Arts Grade-Level Foundations—Grades K-8*, 2002 Reformatted April 2003; *Oregon English/Language Arts Grade-Level Standards—Oregon Standards Newspaper 2003-2004*, adopted January 2003; *Overview: Reading/Literature Knowledge and Skills Test Specifications*, June 2001; *Writing Grades 4 & 7: Scored Student Work; Writing Performance Standards—State Writing Performance Assessment*, adopted April 15, 2004; *Reading Scoring Guide, K-3; Reading and Literature Scoring Guide: Intermediate Student Language Version (Grades 4-5); Reading and Literature Scoring Guide: Secondary Student Language Version (Grades 6-12); Student Language Scoring Guide Speaking, K-2, 3, 5, 8, & 10; Student Scoring Guide*

2003-2004—Writing Benchmark 1, 2, & 3; Student Scoring Guide 2003-2004—Writing, CIM; Official Scoring Guide, Writing & Speaking, 2003-2004

Oregon	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	10
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	11
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	23
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	18
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-1
Total:	61
Final GPA:	2.77
Final 2005 Grade:	B
*2000 Grade:	D

This review covers Oregon's new 2002 standards document, developed with the help of Achieve, Inc., and significantly better than its predecessor. The standards now are grouped in coherent categories and subcategories and are now presented grade by grade from K-8, with one set for high school. Most areas in the English language arts and reading are addressed satisfactorily. In the area of reading, there are strong beginning reading standards, with indicators that expect students to learn and apply decoding skills independent of contextual support. The document also recommends that students read culturally or historically significant works and memorable speeches.

However, it provides no lists of such works, either in an appendix or at each grade level. Moreover, there are no indicators pointing to cultural or historical content—no group of authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in content-rich and content-specific standards that outline the essential substantive content of the secondary English curriculum. In addition, before high school, students are expected to relate what they read to personal experience. For example, in grade 8 students are expected to "support interpretations through references to the text, other works, other authors, or to personal knowledge," which suggests that they could omit all reference to the text itself.

Oregon can strengthen its academic expectations by crafting some content-rich and content-specific standards addressing classical, British, and American literature—inclusively conceived—at each grade from 7 to 12 to guide curriculum planning and assessment. The state can further strengthen its expectations by providing more than a single set of standards at the high school level. The Beaver State might also consider developing selective lists of titles and authors from which teachers might choose for part of their curriculum, either in an appendix or grade by grade, in order to guide the quality of independent reading as well as state assessments.

Pennsylvania

Reviewed: *22 Pennsylvania Code*, Chapter 4 Appendix A: Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening, 1999; *2004 PSSA Reading Assessment Overview; Assessment Anchors—Reading. 3, 8, & 11*, April 2004; *Getting Ready! Reading Assessment Handbook Supplement 2004 PSSA; PA Literacy Framework; Writing Assessment Handbook; Grade 6 & 9 Writing Handbook Supplement; Grade 6, 9, & 11 Writing Handbook Supplement 2003-2004*; Released Writing Prompts; 2004 Reading Released Items (from the 2003 PSSA); *Before During After Reading Strategies*

Pennsylvania	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	9
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	11
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	24
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	16
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-1
Total:	59
Final GPA:	2.68
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	C

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Pennsylvania's most recent standards, released in 1999 and previously reviewed for the State of State Standards 2000, have many strengths. Almost all of them are clear, specific, and measurable; the organizing strands reflect coherent bodies of research or scholarship; the standards satisfactorily address almost all areas in the English language arts and reading well, especially in the research strand; and in most areas there are regular increases over the years in intellectual difficulty. The standards also contain an excellent category on the characteristics and functions of the English language.

However, Pennsylvania's standards continue to have important limitations. It is not at all clear that phonics will be taught explicitly and systematically. In particular, decoding skills are not mentioned independent of context in grade 3. In addition, there is no indication that students in the Keystone State should be expected to acquire reading, writing, and speaking skills for the purpose of becoming literate American citizens. Even worse, the standards include an underdeveloped literature strand, offering no literary or cultural specifics at all. For example, there is no mention of specific literary traditions or periods in American and British literary history—indeed, no mention of American literature at all as an inclusive body of literature, never mind some of its major themes, key authors, or works.

Pennsylvania needs to craft content-rich and content-specific literature standards for grades 7 to 12 that point to a key group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in classical, British, and American literature and that provide an outline of the essential content of the English curriculum in the secondary grades. It might also develop selective reading lists to accompany each grade level in order to guide independent reading as well as curriculum planning and state assessments. Without clearer and stronger academic demands in the secondary literature curriculum, Pennsylvania's standards are unlikely to lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students. Indeed, they are more likely to lead to inequities because of the various ways in which teachers and test developers may interpret them.

Rhode Island

Reviewed: *The Rhode Island English Language Arts Framework, 1996; Tri-State New England (TSNE) Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for Reading in Grades 2-5; Tri-State New England (TSNE) Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for Reading in Grades 5-8; Tri-State New England (TSNE) Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for Writing in Grades 3-8*

Rhode Island	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**11**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**9**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**16**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**12**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-2**
Total:	**46**
Final GPA:	**2.09**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**F**

This review addresses the 1996 standards document and the 2004 draft of the *Tri-State New England Grade Level Expectations for Reading* (Grades 2-8) and *Writing* (Grades 3-8). The new grade level expectations for reading and writing (which were developed for use by Vermont, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island) are excellent and show how small states can jointly create quality standards that might be difficult for each state to create individually and that provide uniform expectations across a region. The new grade level expectations in reading are coherent, well-written, and comprehensive. They contain a strong strand on vocabulary growth through grade 8. The other strands are similarly coherent, well-written, and comprehensive; the literature strand for 3-8 also provides a few titles as examples of text complexity. The new expectations satisfactorily address, for grades 2-8, the many limitations in Rhode Island's 1996 document, which was heavily committed to a process-oriented and peer- and self-centered mode of learning.

However, while it is clear in the new reading expectations for grades 2 to 8 that decoding skills are to help in word identification, until new K-1 expectations are crafted, it will not be clear whether students are expected to learn them systematically and be able to apply them independent of context. And until new 9-12 expectations are crafted, it will not be clear whether American and British literature will be required reading in English classes.

New grade level expectations are now being worked out for K-2, and for 9-12, but they are not yet completed. It is an understatement to say that the 1996 high school standards they will ultimately replace are inadequate. For example, they never once mentioned the word "literature." If the forthcoming literature expectations or standards for grades 9-12 are content-rich and content-specific, specifying a group of key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions from classical, British, and American literature, and outlining the core literary content of the high school English curriculum, they can lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the state by graduation. Selective lists of titles or authors might also be provided at each grade level from 7 to 12 to guide the construction of classroom curricula, the quality of independent reading desired, and state assessments for students and for prospective teachers of English and elementary school.

South Carolina

Reviewed: South Carolina English Language Arts Curriculum Standards 2002; ELA Blueprint for PACT; Measuring Student Performance through the Creation of Scoring Guides

South Carolina's standards have a coherent organizational scheme and for the most part its standards are clear, specific, and measurable. The standards quite satisfactorily address almost all areas of the English language arts and reading. The standards for listening and speaking are excellent. Students are expected to acquire beginning reading skills, set forth in a strand on phonics and word study. There are strong vocabulary objectives through the grades, and the level of literary analysis demanded of students through the grade levels is very high.

South Carolina	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	13
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	12
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	25
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	18
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-4
Total:	64
Final GPA:	2.91
Final 2005 Grade:	B
*2000 Grade:	B

Still, South Carolina provides no list of recommended readings or any reference to individual authors, works of literature, literary periods, or literary traditions within the standards document or in supplementary materials. This is especially noteworthy considering that the Palmetto State's previous document had a literature strand that expected students to learn key literary periods, themes, and archetypal characters in American and British literature, in addition to selected texts from classical, contemporary, and world literature. Now, students are simply expected to read and analyze "a variety of literary works." Additionally, at every grade level from PreK to 12, there is an inappropriate objective requiring a student to "make connections" between independently read texts and "his or her prior knowledge, other texts, and the world." To strengthen this document, some content-rich and content-specific standards should be crafted for grades 7 to 12 that point to a group of authors, works, literary traditions, and literary periods and serve to outline the essential substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum.

The high school listening standards laudably expect students to study "historically significant speeches," yet no list is provided of such speeches, and no similar standard can be found in the reading strand. This list of speeches might be developed and placed in an appendix.

Perhaps new standards might require students, at appropriate grade levels, to read works by well-known authors

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

who were born in or wrote about South Carolina, as well as biographical selections about well-known South Carolina figures in United States and state history. Selective and inclusive lists of these authors and works could also be placed in appendices, to be drawn on by teachers and assessors to guide the level of difficulty as well as the quality of reading passages on state tests.

South Dakota

Reviewed: South Dakota Reading Content Standards, K-12, 2004 Revision; *South Dakota Communication Arts Content Standards*, 2004 Revision; *Curriculum Mapping for South Dakota Essential Core Standards, 3-8 & 11*

South Dakota	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**19**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**12**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**22**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**21**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**0**
Total:	**74**
Final GPA:	**3.36**
Final 2005 Grade:	**B**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

This review addresses documents containing content standards and grade-level standards dated 2002 and 2004, documents with many more strengths than the original 1998 document reviewed for the *State of State Standards 2000*. South Dakota's standards are now based on a coherent organizing scheme; are for the most part clear, specific, and measurable; and address almost all areas of the English language arts and reading very satisfactorily. For example, the reading standards expect beginning readers to acquire explicit decoding skills that can be used independent of context. In addition, for each standard, there are statements of levels for knowledge, analysis, and application based on Bloom's Taxonomy, and for each grade there are performance descriptors for levels of performance.

However, the standards still have some serious limitations, chiefly with respect to the study of literature. First, the literature standards do not clearly distinguish the elements and devices for the four major categories: fiction, poetry, dramatic literature, and literary non-fiction. Second, one subcategory for literary study, Indicator 3, contains few academic benchmarks and few meaningful or teachable standards. Finally, and most serious, there are no key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language specified in the grade level standards to outline the essential content of the secondary school English curriculum. Without these specifics, South Dakota's standards cannot lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in its schools.

South Dakota could strengthen its standards considerably by doing two things. First, it should invite a group of experienced and well-trained English teachers to craft some content-rich and content-specific literature standards for grades 7 to 12, completely rewriting the unteachable literature standards in Indicator 3. Second, the standards need to suggest specifically how the excellent list of literary works titled *Suggested Authors, Illustrators, and Works Reflecting Our Common Literary and Cultural Heritage*, in Appendix B, should be drawn upon at each grade level for curriculum planning and for state assessments.

Tennessee

Reviewed: A Blueprint for Learning: A Teacher's Guide to the Tennessee Curriculum, K-8, 2001; English/Language Arts Curriculum Standards, K-12, Approved Aug. 31, 2001; Language Arts Program: Grades 9-12, updated Jan. 12, 2004; 2004 Achievement Test, Form O: NRT Objectives and Sub-Skills Tables by Content Area and Grade Level, 3-8; Gateway Assessment Item Sampler

This review covers the 2001 edition of Tennessee's standards. This document presents a full set of standards grade by grade until grade 8, with what seems to be a partial set for grade 10. Another document on the state's

website (*Language Arts Program: Grades 9-12* dated 2004), provides standards for all of the high school English courses in Tennessee. This 2004 document should be clearly linked to the 2001 edition of Tennessee's standards, which it currently is not.

Tennessee	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	8
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	6
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	16
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	5
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-3
Total:	32
Final GPA:	1.45
Final 2005 Grade:	D
*2000 Grade:	D

These documents show improvement over previous standards documents in several areas. Beginning reading standards are excellent. Organized around the five elements in the research base for Reading First, they expect students to learn and use decoding strategies for word identification independent of context. The areas of writing and research are adequately covered. The strand on writing conventions is comprehensively worked out grade by grade.

Nonetheless, there are still many limitations in what Tennessee offers as standards, and its overall grade is not higher in 2005 because of the stricter scoring rubrics we used for many criteria. A large number of standards are not clear, specific, or measurable, such as "recognize and identify words within context that reveal particular time periods and cultures," use "cognitive strategies to evaluate text critically," or "explore the techniques of persuasive writing." The standards are also not grouped into categories reflecting coherent bodies of research—reading, for example, mixes literary and non-literary reading and includes listening and speaking skills as well as research. In addition, though the beginning reading standards are excellent, and while a vocabulary substrand does exist through grade 6, the other aspects of reading are not systematically and clearly addressed through the grades.

The commercial tests in reading and language that the state relies on to assess student progress cannot address all the limitations in the document. Until the state specifies a group of authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions for each of its secondary school grades that serve to outline the essential substantive content of the high school English curriculum, there is no basis for uniformly high expectations for all students in the state. At the least, Tennessee might require students at appropriate grade levels to study works by prominent authors who were born in or wrote about Tennessee, as well as biographical selections about prominent figures in U.S. and Tennessee history from Tennessee. The state also could provide a selective list of these works in an appendix. This would begin to provide some of the guidance teachers and assessors need, although it is not a substitute for an outline of the historically and culturally significant works all students should study before they graduate from high school.

Texas

Reviewed: *Texas Education Agency: Curriculum and Assessment Resources*, Fall 2002; *Chapter 110. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for English Language Arts and Reading: Subchapter A (Elementary), B (Middle), C (High) & D (Other), adopted Sept. 1, 1998; Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills Spring 2004 Performance Standards—1 SEM: English Version Tests, 3-11; Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) Blueprints; Released TAKS Tests; TAKS Information Booklets*

Texas's standards are grouped in coherent categories, and most of them are clear, specific, and measurable. They also cover most areas in the English language arts and reading extremely well. In reading, students are to be given systematic instruction in decoding skills, and there is a good vocabulary strand through the grades, especially at the secondary level. The writing standards are strong, as are those for speaking and listening.

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Texas	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	19
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	12
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	24
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	19
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-5
Total:	69
Final GPA:	3.14
Final 2005 Grade:	B
*2000 Grade:	B

Yet, the document needs to be strengthened in a few critical areas. First, the Texas standards currently have several elements that detract from their overall quality. Among them, the misguided expectation that students "connect literature to historical contexts, current events, and his/her own experiences" at all grade levels. In addition, except for one mention of American literature in grade 11 and one mention of British literature in grade 1, there are no literary specifics to speak of. Standards need to be crafted at the secondary level that point to a group of culturally and historically significant authors and works, as well as literary periods and literary traditions for the English language, which outline the essential substantive content of the high school English curriculum grade by grade. Texas should also consider developing some selective lists of titles and authors, in an appendix or to accompany each grade level, to provide teachers, parents, and students with a guide to reading quality and quantity in independent reading.

Utah

Reviewed: *Evaluation and Assessment, 1-6; Secondary Language Arts Criterion-Referenced Test Blueprints, 7-11; Elementary Language Arts Core Curriculum, K-6; Language Arts Standards, K-6, 2003; Language Arts Standards, 7-11, 1999; Utah: Summary of its English Language Arts and Reading Standards; Utah K-3 Literacy Framework for Successful Instruction and Intervention; Utah Direct Writing Assessment; Evaluation and Assessment: Elementary Language Arts*

Utah	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	11
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	9
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	18
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	12
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-12
Total:	38
Final GPA:	1.73
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	C

This review covers the 2003 revision of Utah's Core Curriculum for grades K-6 and the 1999 standards for 7-11. Though the organizational framework of the previous document was maintained, the revised standards for K-6 are distinctly superior to the previous K-6 standards and to the current secondary standards. The new beginning reading standards clearly expect systematic instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics in the primary grades, and they contain a strong vocabulary strand throughout the grades. Also, grade level expectations for writing are clearly outlined, though no samples of student work are provided.

By contrast, the secondary standards are extremely vague. For example, in grade 9 students are expected to "determine when and where to use comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading." They are also highly repetitive, with little increase in complexity from grade to grade. They are clearly oriented to process and the use of strategies, imposing an approach to informational reading as well as literary reading that seems to require no evidence from the text, only the use of personal criteria. Utah provides no list of recommended readings or no reference to individual authors or works of literature or traditions anywhere in their content standards, and no requirement for students to

study American literature. Sample lesson plans offered on their web site in Power Point are not particularly rigorous, focusing on personal response rather than textual analysis.

Moreover, there is no indication that Utah students are expected to become literate American citizens. On the contrary, the standards document seems to go out of its way to deny America's status as a country with its own civic culture, and American literature is not mentioned anywhere. Rather, only the literature of "various cultures" (never identified) is required throughout the grades in order for students to compare them.

Despite the improvement in elementary grade standards, Utah's overall average in 2005 is marginally lower than its 2000 grade primarily because our scoring rubrics for this review were stricter on many of the same criteria, especially those addressing the standards, benchmarks, and/or objectives for literary study with respect to their organization, coverage, and quality. In these areas, with respect to its secondary standards, Utah needs much improvement. Specifically, much stronger academic standards are needed at the secondary level to spell out the use of various interpretive lenses, the major elements of fiction, poetry, and dramatic literature, the major literary devices that students should be able to identify and understand through the grades, and a key group of authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions that outline the essential substantive content of the English curriculum. Utah could also strengthen its standards by cleanly separating literary from non-literary reading and eliminating requirements or expectations noted in Section E that negatively affect literary study and learning how to read literature.

Vermont

Reviewed: *Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, Fall 2000; *DRAFT Tri-State New England (TSNE) Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) for Grades 2-5 Reading, Oct. 15, 2003; DRAFT Tri-State New England (TSNE) Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) Grades 3-8 Writing, October 15, 2003; Grade Expectations for Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, Spring 2004

Vermont	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**16**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**9**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**20**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**10**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-2**
Total:	**53**
Final GPA:	**2.41**
Final 2005 Grade:	**C**
*2000 Grade:	**C**

This review covers Vermont's 2000 standards and the October 2003 draft of the *Tri-State New England Grade Level Expectations for Reading* (grades 2 to 8) and *Writing* (grades 3 to 8). These new grade-level expectations for reading and writing (developed jointly for use by Rhode Island, New Hampshire, and Vermont) are excellent and show how small states with limited resources can jointly create fine standards that might be difficult for each state to create individually. They also help provide uniform expectations across a region. For example, decoding skills are to be applied by students to help in word identification, although it is not clear that they are to be systematically taught in kindergarten and first grade independent of context.

Grade-level expectations for literary study for grades 2 to 8 contain fine objectives, and a few sample titles are offered for grades 3 to 8 to show levels of complexity. Yet standards for high school (from the 2000 document) show no key works, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions to be studied as the content of the literature curriculum. This is ironic. The document describes literary study as a Field of Knowledge, yet its broad statements on American literature contain no illustrative or clarifying details, leaving it a mysterious field of knowledge. In addition, the standards' disciplinary coverage is uneven, especially in high school. For example, the indicators for listening and speaking are very skimpy, spanning all grade levels. Nor are there adequate grade-specific expectations for reading in grades 9 to 12.

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

To strengthen its standards at the high school level and show academically substantive increases in complexity by grade 12, Vermont needs to provide more than a single set of standards for 9 through 12, or, at the very least, one set for 9-10 and another for 11-12. Most important, the state needs to specify a group of culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions that outline grade by grade the field of knowledge called literature—the substantive content of the high school English curriculum. The document could, as a beginning, require students to study, at appropriate grade levels, high-quality works by prominent authors who were born in or wrote about Vermont, as well as biographical selections about prominent figures in U.S. and Vermont history from Vermont, and then list these works in an appendix. This would start to provide more specific guidance to teachers and to state assessment experts about the intellectual level that all students should be expected to attain by graduation.

Virginia

Reviewed: *English Standards for Learning for Virginia Public Schools*, adopted November 2002; *Commonwealth of Virginia Standards of Learning Assessment Program: Blueprints for Grade 3, 5, 8, & Secondary English, 1997; English Standards of Learning Curriculum Framework*, Approved February 26, 2003

Virginia	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	20
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	12
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	23
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	16
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-0
Total:	71
Final GPA:	3.23
Final 2005 Grade:	B
*2000 Grade:	B

This review covers Virginia's 2002 standards document and its 2003 curriculum framework, both of which have many strengths. The standards are given grade by grade from K-12 and are grouped in coherent categories: reading (with a clear distinction between literary and non-literary reading); writing; oral language; and, in grades 9-12, a separate strand for research. All beginning reading standards are fully spelled out, making it clear that students are to be able to apply decoding skills independent of contextual approaches. Study of American literature is required in grade 11, and it is described in an inclusive way. There are fine standards on literary elements, genres, techniques, and the use of different interpretive lenses. Students are also expected to read works from the different literary periods in American and British literature. The detailed information provided in the curriculum framework in the section on knowledge, skills, and processes should be of great value to Virginia teachers.

However, there are many uninterpretable or unteachable standards on literary study in the high school grades. For example, students are expected to "describe contributions of different cultures to the development of American literature" and to "describe how use of context and language structures conveys an author's intent and viewpoint in contemporary and historical essays, speeches, and critical reviews." Additionally, vocabulary development just about disappears in 9 to 12. Most seriously, the standards do not point to a group of key titles or authors to outline the substantive content of the high school English curriculum, grade by grade.

Virginia could strengthen its literature and reading standards by eliminating the unteachable standards in the current document and, more importantly, by specifying a small group of literary and non-literary authors or works that outline the essential substantive content for the secondary school English curriculum grade by grade. Otherwise, the standards addressing the formal content of the English curriculum may be interpreted in various ways by test developers and teachers and not lead to uniformly high expectations for all students in the state. It might also develop some selective lists of titles or authors, pegged to appropriate grade levels, from which choices could be made for part of the secondary school English curriculum and state assess-

ments, and which could also be drawn upon to suggest the quality and quantity of independent reading that students should do through the grades.

Washington

Reviewed: *4-12 Reading Intervention Materials Review Washington State Evaluation Report, May 2004; Reading Grade Level Expectations*, Jan. 13, 2004; *Essential Academic Learning Requirements—Writing*, 1998; *A Framework for Achieving the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in Writing for Washington State, K-10, revised July 2001; Essential Academic Learning Requirements—Communication, K-10*, approved Feb. 26, 1997; *Washington Assessment of Student Learning Test Specifications, 4, 7, & 10*

Washington	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	**7**
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	**7**
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	**21**
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	**10**
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	**-18**
Total:	**27**
Final GPA:	**1.23**
Final 2005 Grade:	**F**
*2000 Grade:	**D**

Washington's standards documents contain some strengths. Systematic instruction in decoding skills is clearly set forth, there is a strong vocabulary strand over the grades, and most areas of the English language arts and reading are covered well.

However, unlike the state's first set of standards in English language arts and reading, this is a confusing document to read. Its organizational scheme has been poorly conceptualized. Communications is chiefly about listening and speaking but also includes analysis and criticism of the media. Writing mingles objectives for literary and non-literary writing, even though the document lists the genres for each separately. Reading does not have cleanly separated sections for literary/narrative and informational/expository objectives.

The 2004 standards are also much less rigorous than in the previous document. Some grade-level expectations are clear and specific and can be used for assessments, but a large number are processes, strategies, or pretentious statements with no clear academic objective—reductionist in goal and often incomprehensible. For example, in grade 8 students are expected to "understand different perspectives of family, friendship, culture, and traditions found in literature" and to "generalize about universal themes, human nature, cultural and historical perspectives, etc., from reading multiple texts." In grade 10, they should "integrate information from different sources to form conclusions about author's assumptions, biases, credibility, cultural and social perspectives, or world views"; "analyze and evaluate the reasoning and ideas underlying author's beliefs and assumptions within multiple texts"; and, possibly the most pretentious of them all, "analyze and evaluate the great literary works from a variety of cultures to determine their contribution to the understanding of self, others, and the world." Worse yet, the document implies that students should read only what is "culturally relevant," as evidenced by the expectation that they "state the theme/message and supporting details in culturally relevant literary/narrative text." In the glossary, culturally relevant literary/narrative text is defined as "reading materials to which the student can identify or relate." It seems that students are to be restricted to reading works that the teacher deems part of their "culture," a condescending and limiting perspective on what children are capable of reading and should be exposed to.

Although the document never provides titles of literary texts as examples of grade-level expectations, it regularly provides examples of social and political topics to guide literary reading. For example, grade 7 students are to "identify multiple perspectives from a variety of cultures or historical periods as expressed in literary genres (e.g., changes in medical practices from 1800 to the present)" and "identify recurring themes in literature that reflect worldwide social and/or economic change (e.g., social change such as characters that change their attitudes after learning about different cultures)." Students in grades 9 and 10 are to "find text passages

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

that support an inference that the author advocates economic change" and determine "who might benefit from reading the story/poem/selection."

Washington should eliminate those standards for the English language arts that seem to serve as expressions of some person's or group's particular political and social goals. Instead, it should craft sound and comprehensible academic expectations for literary study through the grades, using titles of recognized literary works as examples of its expectations. Without a few content-rich and content-specific standards pointing to a group of culturally and/or historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language that outline the essential substantive content of the English curriculum, particularly at the secondary level, its standards cannot lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the Evergreen State.

West Virginia

Reviewed: *Executive Summary: Policy 2520.1 Reading and English Language Arts Content Standards and Electives for West Virginia Schools; Westest Blueprint—Reading/Language Arts Coverage Summary (All Grades); West Virginia Writing Assessment, Grade 4, 7, and 10*

West Virginia	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	15
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	7
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	22
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	18
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-3
Total:	59
Final GPA:	2.68
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	B

This review is based on West Virginia's 2003 document, which has many strengths. It provides standards grade by grade from K-12 and addresses almost all areas of the English language arts and reading satisfactorily. Overall, it has a sound organizational scheme and generally offers clear, specific, and measurable standards that show increasing difficulty over the grades. It clearly expects systematic phonics instruction in the primary grades. The high school literary objectives are clear and strong—and better than those for the elementary and middle school. Many literary elements, genres, and techniques are mentioned and the document is to be commended for requiring study of West Virginia authors as well as national and international authors.

However, West Virginia's standards are not always grouped in meaningful ways within a category; literary and non-literary objectives are completely mixed up under reading, and even within an objective on literary texts the examples mingle literary and non-literary techniques or elements. Some of its reading/literature standards require students without a solid background in history or current events to connect what they read to social and political issues ("make text connections to self, to other text and to the real world") and, worse yet, to generalize from the little they know ("relates information to global situations and makes generalizations"). No key authors, works, or literary periods and traditions are mentioned for study of American, British, and world literature. Those responsible for the document may mistakenly believe that "attention to multicultural education," emphasized in the introduction as the major focus of the reading strand, is incompatible with any attempt to define literary quality, levels of reading difficulty expected at various grades, or key works, authors, literary periods, and traditions with which all American students, regardless of background, should be familiar.

West Virginia could strengthen this document by crafting a group of content-rich and specific standards pointing to culturally and historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in order to outline the essential substantive content of the high school English curriculum. Without such standards, the state cannot expect its objectives and assessments to lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the Panhandle State. They may instead lead to inequities in the different ways that teachers and test developers interpret them.

Wisconsin

Reviewed: *Wisconsin Model Academic Standards for English Language Arts; Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations at Grades 4, 8, and 10; Alignment Studies for Grades 4, 8, and 10*

Wisconsin	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	5
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	9
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	22
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	12
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-4
Total:	44
Final GPA:	2.00
Final 2005 Grade:	C
*2000 Grade:	B

This review covers Wisconsin's 1998 standards document and the May 2004 draft of its *Assessment Framework in Reading for Grades 3-8*. Most of the categories in its standards document reflect coherent bodies of research. Wisconsin clearly expects students to use standard English in writing and speaking, and the document adequately addresses most areas of the English language arts and reading. The strand on research is extremely well done. Overall, most standards show increasing difficulty over the grades, and a large number of the standards in the 1998 document are measurable. The draft of its assessment framework in reading contains clear, precise, and measurable statements.

However, Wisconsin's overall rating in this review is much lower than in 2000, for the same set of standards. Several factors account for the decline, chiefly relating to our higher expectations with respect to clarity, specificity, readability, and measurability of a state's standards, and to cultural and literary specifics. In addition, Wisconsin mentions phonics and decoding skills only within the larger category of "using effective reading strategies," placing Wisconsin outside the mainstream established by evidence from reading research. The reading and literature category doesn't clearly distinguish literary from non-literary reading in its subcategories. A large number of standards have no clearly discernible point and are not academic standards so much as unmeasurable or impossible-to-teach statements of instructional aspiration. Some are also developmentally inappropriate, as this mandate for grade 4: "Speaking from notes or a brief outline, communicate precise information and accurate instructions in clearly organized and sequenced detail." Others are unmeasurable if not incomprehensible, as in "draw on a broad base of knowledge about the themes, ideas, and insights found in classical literature while reading, interpreting, and reflecting on contemporary texts." Although the document mentions study of "classical" and "contemporary" literature, and texts from "the United States and cultures worldwide," there are no literary or cultural specifics provided to define or illustrate these terms.

Wisconsin could strengthen its academic standards in a number of ways. First, it needs to provide standards for no more than spans of two grades at a time. It should revise a good number of its literature standards to make them clearer, measurable, and teachable for the grade levels intended. And above all, it needs to craft a group of standards pointing to some culturally or historically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions for the English language that ground its currently unteachable standards in a K-12 reality and to provide the contours of the substantive content of the English curriculum for the secondary grades. As now written, these standards cannot lead to uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the Badger state. Indeed, they are more apt to lead to inequities because of the various ways in which K-12 teachers are likely to interpret the standards.This review covers Wyoming's 2003 standards document, which has some strengths. Standards are presented

Wyoming

Reviewed: *Wyoming Language Arts Content and Performance Standards*, adopted July 7, 2003; *Wyoming ELA Blueprint for all Grades—Year 2-4; The Wyoming Assessment Handbook*

* In order to compare the 2005 scores to the 2000 scores, the grade point average was calculated for each state's total score in 2000 and then converted to a letter grade using the new scale. Readers should note, however, that the review form used in 2005 differs somewhat from the form used in 2000.

Wyoming	TOTAL SCORE
Section A: Purposes and Expectations (out of 24)	5
Section B: Organization (out of 12)	5
Section C: Disciplinary Coverage (out of 28)	19
Section D: Quality (out of 24)	6
Section E: Negative Criteria (out of 24)	-7
Total:	28
Final GPA:	1.27
Final 2005 Grade:	F
*2000 Grade:	C

This review covers Wyoming's 2003 standards document, which has some strengths. Standards are presented grade by grade from K to 8, although there is only one set for grades 9 to 11. Most areas in the English language arts and reading are adequately covered by Wyoming's standards and benchmarks, several reasonably well.

However, the standards and benchmarks are not organized in coherent groups, and many of them are incomprehensible or poorly written. Too many benchmarks require students to "use strategies" or to "connect ideas"—processes that are not measurable. The performance descriptors explain more clearly than the standards what the expectation is, but they, too, are often beyond measurability, if not comprehension. The reading standards for crucial beginning reading skills are not distributed across the primary grades but, for some reason, concentrated almost completely in kindergarten. Literary study is an area with serious deficiencies. There is no expectation that students are to study American literature, never mind specific literary periods in American cultural and intellectual history, nor key authors or works.

Wyoming's 2003 standards are weaker than their predecessors in several areas. For example, the 1998 document specifically outlined the reading material the state wanted students to read at the grade levels assessed by the state test. In addition, more standards in the 2003 document are incomprehensible. For example: "Students understand elements of literature including…universal themes including the philosophical assumptions and underlying beliefs of author's work…" (grade 11, p. 10); "students use meaningful voice by adapting writing for different audiences and purposes by using suitable content, vocabulary, style, structure, tone and voice; considering background, age, knowledge of audience; and using appropriate level of formality" (grade 11, p. 14); "[students] evaluate literary merit and synthesize universal themes across texts" (advanced performance descriptor, grade 11, p. 9); "students use meaningful word choice, voice, and sentence fluency" (grade 7, p. 29); "students write and share literary analyses using grade-level-appropriate strategies such as describing connections between historical and cultural influences and literary selections" (grade 7, p. 31); "students make connections among texts and themselves" (grade 3, p. 54). Further, several criteria on which the state received a lower rating in the 2005 review are different or more demanding in their specifics.

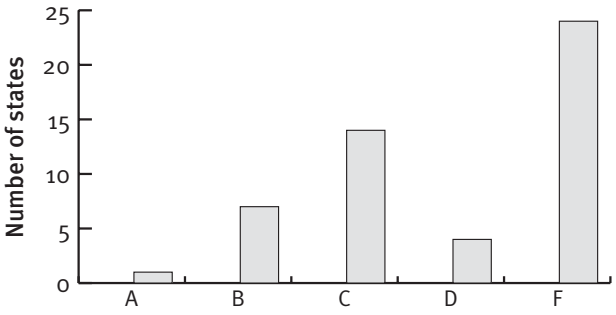
To strengthen its academic standards, Wyoming might draw upon the services of a group of highly experienced English teachers to craft standards pointing to a group of key authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions that outline the essential substantive content of the secondary school English curriculum, grade by grade or for two two-year grade spans, 9-10 and 11-12. They should also demonstrate to Wyoming parents uniformly high academic expectations for all students in the Equality State. As written, the standards and benchmarks may instead lead to inequities, because they will be interpreted by teachers and test developers in different ways.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

It is widely understood that a state's K-12 standards affect student achievement when they are used to guide the classroom teacher's daily lessons and annual state assessments. It is less widely understood that a state's K-12 standards may affect student achievement more effectively when they are used by the state to shape its teacher-preparation programs, subject-matter tests, and professional development activities. The quality and content of a state's E/LA/R standards—and of the classroom lessons that address them—indirectly reflect the English and reading courses taken by teachers in its institutions of higher education. The converse should also be true. That is why it is important to determine whether English and reading courses taken by future teachers are influenced by a state's K-12 literature and reading standards. In addition, because NCLB explicitly links student achievement (based on a state's standards) to teacher quality and to "high quality" professional development, all states should ensure that prospective English and reading teachers are prepared to teach to their K-12 standards and that current teachers address those standards in the course of their professional development. That this is not happening on a national scale is clear from the results on the five criteria in Section F, shown in Table 4 below.

Graph 23: Section F: Further Uses of the Standards

Distribution of state grades



- F-1: For program approval, the state requires teacher-training programs to include coursework that shows pre-service teachers how to teach to its K-12 standards.
- F-2: For program approval, the state requires teacher-training programs to show that pre-service teachers are acquiring the subject-matter knowledge needed for teaching to the state's K-12 literature and composition standards in their arts and sciences courses.
- F-3: The state requires student teachers to use the state's K-12 reading and English language arts standards in developing and teaching lessons in practica for licensure in any position addressing them.
- F-4: The state requires the subject-matter test(s) that pre-service teachers take for licensure to be informed by the state's K-12 standards. There is a separate subject-matter test for reading pedagogy.
- F-5: The state requires use of its K-12 standards as objectives in professional development for teachers in reading pedagogy, literary study, composition teaching, and research processes.

Table 4: Section F: Further Uses of Standards

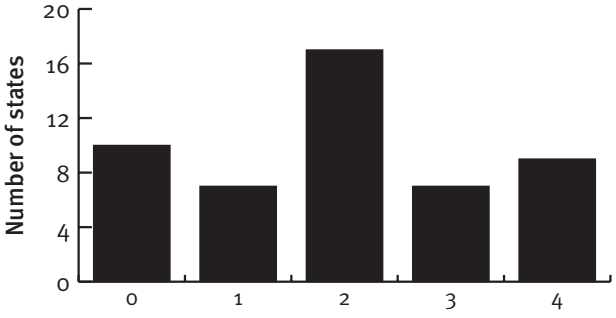
	F-1	F-2	F-3	F-4	F-5	Total	Average
Alabama	4	3	3	1	4	15	3.00
Alaska	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.60
Arizona	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.40
Arkansas	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.20
California	4	0	2	4	3	13	2.60
Colorado	4	2	4	2	2	14	2.80
Connecticut	2	0	0	0	3	5	1.00
Delaware	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.40
Florida	2	0	2	3	4	11	2.20
Georgia	4	2	3	0	3	12	2.40
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	4	4	0.80
Idaho	2	2	2	2	3	11	2.20
Illinois	3	1	4	3	3	14	2.80
Indiana	1	0	1	1	3	6	1.20
Iowa							
Kansas	1	0	1	0	1	3	0.60
Kentucky	2	4	3	0	3	12	2.40
Louisiana	2	0	2	0	3	7	1.40
Maine	3	3	3	0	0	9	1.80
Maryland	3	0	1	0	0	4	0.80
Massachusetts	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.00
Michigan	3	4	4	3	3	17	3.40
Minnesota	3	0	1	0	3	7	1.40
Mississippi	2	4	4	0	3	13	2.60
Missouri	3	4	4	0	1	12	2.40
Montana	2	0	0	0	1	3	0.60
Nebraska	4	4	4	0	4	16	3.20
Nevada	2	0	2	0	3	7	1.40
New Hampshire	2	2	2	3	3	12	2.40
New Jersey	2	0	2	0	2	6	1.20
New Mexico	2	0	2	3	3	10	2.00
New York	4	2	4	3	2	15	3.00
North Carolina	1	1	0	0	3	5	1.00
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.20
Ohio	2	0	2	0	2	6	1.20
Oklahoma	2	2	2	4	3	13	2.60
Oregon	2	0	0	0	1	3	0.60
Pennsylvania	2	2	3	0	3	10	2.00
Rhode Island	1	1	0	0	3	5	1.00
South Carolina	1	1	1	0	3	6	1.20
South Dakota	1	0	1	0	1	3	0.60
Tennessee	2	0	2	0	1	5	1.00
Texas	4	3	1	3	3	14	2.80
Utah	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.60
Vermont	3	0	4	0	0	7	1.40
Virginia	0	0	0	2	3	5	1.00
Washington	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.40
Washington, DC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
West Virginia	2	4	0	0	3	9	1.80
Wisconsin	4	4	3	0	2	13	2.60
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.60
National Average							1.96

*Fordham staff tried to obtain accurate and current information from every state department of education to address these criteria, but we were unable to get clear information on all criteria from every state. These scores represent our best efforts to interpret the information we received from a state. In this section, we ordinarily used a score of 2 in situations where the information we received was ambiguous or unclear, indicating that a state's practice warranted more than a 1 but not a mark of 3 or 4. Because information was sometimes incomplete or inconclusive, we did not include scores from Section F in the states' overall grade point averages.

Teacher Preparation and Licensure

Graph 24:

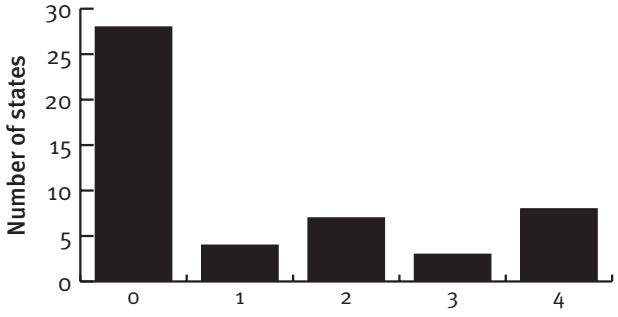
F-1: Teacher training programs are required to include coursework that shows pre-service teachers how to teach to its K-12 standards.



To ensure that new teachers can teach to its K-12 standards, a state should have four specific policies in place. First, it should require all teacher-training programs, when they seek state approval, to show exactly where in their methods courses prospective teachers are learning how to teach to these standards. Based on our evaluation, just 16 states did so, thus earning a 3 or 4 on criterion F-1. A state earned a top mark if it made clear what evidence a training program is expected to provide to the department of education or other responsible body, such as showing that the state's K-12 E/LA/R standards are required reading on course syllabi, or that copies of the standards are distributed to the students in methods courses. Another 17 states might have been eligible for a 3 or 4, but the information we were given by these states was difficult to interpret clearly (hence they received a 2). Seventeen other states received a 1 or 0 because they do not seem to require their teacher-training programs to address their student standards or do not monitor such efforts.

Graph 25:

F-2: Teacher training programs are required to show that pre-service teachers acquire the subject matter knowledge needed for teaching to the state's standards in their arts and sciences courses.



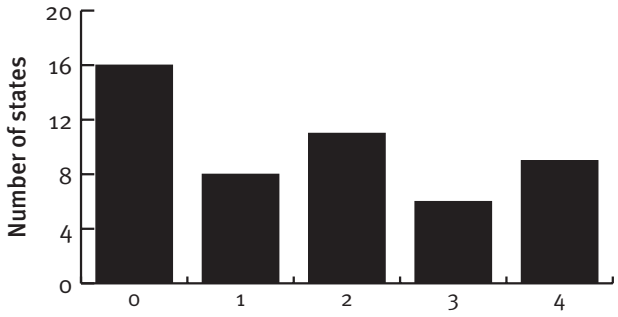
Second, to ensure that prospective English and elementary teachers acquire the content knowledge needed to address a state's K-12 standards, the state should require higher education faculty (in both education and arts and sciences) to show where that knowledge is taught (criterion F-2). Completion of an English major today is not an adequate substitute for information on the specific courses that prospective teachers take to acquire the content knowledge needed to teach the elementary and secondary grades. (A major might, for example, focus narrowly on a single area of English literature or, in a specialty like creative writing, have little to do with literature at all.) Yet only 11 states clearly require their training programs to indicate to state monitors where prospective elementary and English teachers acquire the content knowledge that they need, thus earning a 3 or 4. Eight of these 11 earned a 4 because they identified the evidence they expect to see: copies of course syllabi, with a matrix indicating where the needed content knowledge is taught. Another seven states could not be easily judged on the basis of the information we received. Four states earned a 1 for saying that they require teacher-training institutions to show where relevant content knowledge is acquired but provided no further information. The remainder (28) received a 0, either because they furnished no information or because they do not require this information.

Third, the state should require student teachers to address its K-12 reading and English standards in their practice teaching, for which they should be evaluated by

both the program supervisor and the supervising classroom teacher on how well they address the relevant standards in the lessons they plan and teach (F-3). Yet, according to the information we received, only 15 states do this. Eleven others supplied ambiguous information. In the remaining 24, this does not seem to be a requirement or is a requirement unmonitored by the department of education.

Graph 26:

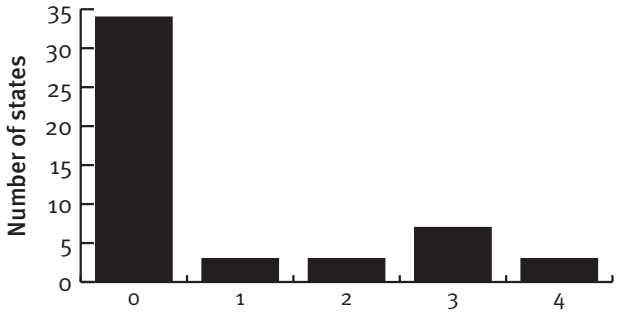
F-3: Student teachers are required to use the state's ELA standards in developing and teaching lessons in practica for licensure.



Fourth, a state's K-12 standards should influence its subject matter tests for teacher licensure (F-4). Prospective English teachers usually take a test addressing literature, composition, rhetoric, and the English language, while prospective elementary teachers usually take a test addressing the knowledge needed for teaching the major academic subjects taught in the elementary grades. A separate test for reading pedagogy is also highly desirable.

Graph 27:

F-4: The subject matter test(s) that pre-service teachers take for licensure must be informed by the state's K-12 standards.

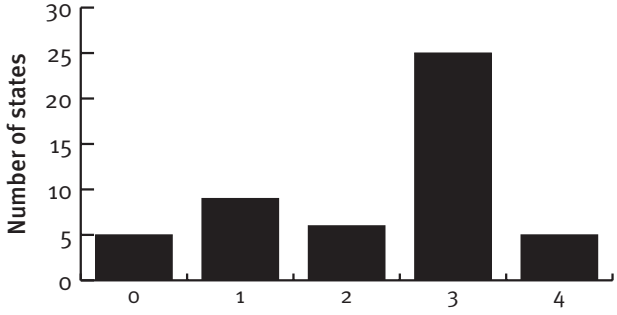


Thirty-four states received a 0 on this criterion, either because they had no subject matter tests (six states) or because their tests are not informed by their K-12 standards. (Many tests are described as "aligned" with K-12 standards, but this is an unclear qualification.) Three states earned a 1 because our information suggested that their K-12 standards in some way inform their tests; they may, for example, have required adjustment of a nationally developed test. Three states earned a 2 due to unclear information. Seven states (Florida, Illinois, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, and Texas) earned ratings of 3 because their test objectives are related to the courses required for prospective teachers and to their K-12 standards. Only three states (California, Massachusetts, and Oklahoma) earned a top mark because they also had a test of reading pedagogy for prospective elementary teachers based on their own reading standards.

Professional Development

Graph 28:

F-5: The state's K-12 standards must be used as objectives in professional development in reading pedagogy, literary study, composition teaching, and research processes



Finally, a state's K-12 standards should guide its professional development activities so as to help teachers better address the content of the curriculum. On criterion F-5, 25 states earned a 3 because they require state-sponsored professional development activities to address their K-12 standards. Five more earned top marks because they monitored these activities in an

effective way (e.g., site visits, external evaluations, pre- and post-tests, or graded products). Six states received a 2 due to unclear information. Nine states received a 1; their guidelines only suggest, not require, use of their K-12 standards in professional development. Five states received a 0, either because their professional development is locally controlled and the state cannot require school districts to base it on the K-12 standards or because we received no information.

Commentary

Although more than half of the states now have strong beginning reading standards in place, fewer than half clearly require their teacher-training programs to show exactly where (if at all) prospective teachers are learning how to teach to any of the state's K-12 standards. More troublesome, only 14 states seem to require future teachers to address their K-12 standards in their student teaching. These are huge holes that need to be plugged, especially for reading pedagogy, unless states want their local school districts and departments of education to continue to shoulder the burden and expense of retraining already licensed elementary and special education teachers via professional development workshops.

Given the various courses that an undergraduate English major may take today, it is also alarming that only half the states require evidence of where prospective English and elementary teachers have acquired the content knowledge needed for addressing their K-12 literature standards. In some states, future English teachers need only complete requirements for an English major—requirements determined by the arts and sciences faculty of the institution alone or in cooperation with a board of higher education. If a state does not require evidence of where the needed content knowledge has been acquired, one can only hope that its board of higher education or regents ensures that some of the courses required for an English major do, in fact, provide that knowledge.

That well over half the states do not require their K-12 standards to inform their subject-matter tests for teachers is further cause for concern, especially because there is no independent evidence that the subject-matter test most frequently used by states (ETS's PRAXIS test) addresses the kind of content-specific literature standards that can be found in the states with the highest ratings in this area. Moreover, states using either PRAXIS tests or those tailored to their own standards set their own cut score. In a caustic commentary on the first Title II report on the quality of teacher preparation in the 50 states, put out by the U.S. Department of Education in June 2002, the Education Trust noted that most cut scores are set at or below the 25th percentile.[3] Worse yet, according to its study of teacher tests in 1999, most have content that is at a high school level.[4]

States should require subject-matter tests for licensure that address the requisite content knowledge. These can be state-specific or national in scope, such as the new exams developed by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE), so long as there is independent evidence that they are based on high standards and have high cut scores that are nationally determined. Requiring prospective teachers to pass subject matter tests with a high cut score will help hold liberal arts and education faculties to account for what they teach prospective English and elementary teachers.

Few states presently require prospective teachers of elementary students to pass a test of reading pedagogy. States that want new teachers of elementary, special education, and English language learner students to be well prepared to address strong beginning reading standards and Reading First requirements should create their own test of reading pedagogy, consider the ABCTE test now being planned, or ask ETS to revise its current Introduction to the Teaching of Reading Test (part of the PRAXIS series) so that it addresses the research-based requirements of Reading First.

Although few states have policies in place that ensure that new teachers will emerge from their training institutions prepared to address their K-12 standards, at least half of the states do require use of their K-12 standards in some or all of their professional development. (Some states cannot do this because of "local control" requirements.) What is not clear is how their use can be monitored by more than self-evaluation. States tend to be wary of requiring rigorous pre/post tests in professional development, and they are unlikely to have the

funds for hiring independent evaluators to assure that "high quality" professional development has indeed taken place. So, despite a generally strong showing on criterion F-5, the use of K-12 standards in professional development is not apt to make up for their absence in initial teacher preparation—where it really counts.

Conclusions

This review of state E/LA/R standards takes place at a crucial time in the history of American education–in the context of a revision of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that links student achievement to teacher quality. Many states are successfully upgrading their academic standards, the linchpin for systemic educational reform. Half of them now have strong expectations for elementary reading. Many also have a strong and distinct vocabulary strand, measurable standards in most areas, and standards that show increasing difficulty over the grades. More than half of the states also seem to have strong expectations for writing. Yet an analysis of the results in those areas that demarcate the substantive content of the secondary English curriculum suggests that we face grave problems here. The failure of three-fourths of the states to provide content-rich and content-specific standards for literary and non-literary reading at the secondary level undermines three vital elements of education reform.

1. Equity: Content-light standards leave the quality and complexity of literary or non-literary texts unclear to teachers, administrators, and school boards—the more so if those standards are also unteachable. More is at stake here than a student's ability to read a text closely, carefully, and with subtlety. With no grade-specific content standards addressing representative works or authors from all periods in English literary history, many students may not develop the skills needed for reading the nation's seminal political documents or the primary sources that illumine their historical and cultural context, such as *The Federalist*. Texts shaping the country's history and public language should be a major part of what students study in school literature programs, just as such documents should be a major part of what they study in U.S. history or government classes. The two go hand in hand. Yet such documents cannot be understood without the reading skills acquired through systematic study of key works that inform and comprise the literary and intellectual history of English-speaking people.

Nor may students be able to address post-high school expectations for literary and non-literary competence. One example of such expectations can be seen in *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma that Counts*, the report of the American Diploma Project, which explains that "high school graduates today need to be well-read to succeed in college, in careers, and as citizens in our democratic society."[5] To that end, its first two benchmarks expect graduates to "demonstrate knowledge of 18th and 19th century foundational works of American literature" and "analyze foundational U.S. documents for their historical and literary significance." The failure of a majority of states to highlight citizenship, civic equality, and participation in this country's civic life as a major purpose for developing students' reading, writing, and speaking skills is an acute problem. Are these future adults likely to vote and pay taxes in another land?

2. Assessment: The absence of content-specific literature standards affects the quality of a state's reading assessments in several ways. It may, for example, reduce the role of literary reading in such assessments. In only 16 states do the tests contain as many literary as non-literary passages—which is to say, most state reading assessments place greater weight on topics like bus schedules and instructions on how to make or do something. Furthermore, while literature is commonly divided into three subtypes (fiction, poetry, and dramatic literature, with literary non-fiction sometimes listed as a fourth subtype), and informational reading is divided into its own subtypes (e.g. practical, technical, informational/expository, and persuasive), many test blueprints weight all literary subtypes together in one category while separately weighting the major subtypes of informational reading. This scheme exaggerates the importance of the kind of reading material that is not emphasized in the average high school English class and is not what English teachers are trained to teach. English teachers are trained to teach students how to do close, careful, and thorough reading chiefly through literary texts, not post office forms.

Second, it may affect the quality of literary passages on tests. Few states use literary passages from different periods in American literature or from British literature.

Most use "contemporary" writing or artificially constructed passages, often of dubious literary value. Some states deliberately don't use passages by recognized authors on the illogical ground that this would favor students who have studied these authors. (These are precisely the authors that students *should* be studying, and it is not difficult to find passages from their works not typically taught in the schools.) One informant noted that parents in her state successfully argued against using excerpts from British literature because it constitutes a "foreign" literature. If test developers continue to use blueprints for state tests at the secondary level that accord less weight to fiction, poetry, and drama than to non-fiction (literary, practical, technical, persuasive, or informational) and, at the same time, use criteria that exclude from the fiction, poetry, and drama portion works by culturally or historically significant authors, then such tests are reading tests, not English tests. Consequently, how students do on them will have more to do with what they read in other subjects rather than in their English classes.

3. Teacher Training and Professional Development: The absence of content-rich and content-specific standards in K-12 documents has a profound impact on the courses taken by prospective English teachers, as well as on their subsequent professional development. Conversely, the presence of such standards would exert a powerful and constructive influence on teacher preparation and in-service study. For example, without at least one content-specific K-12 standard requiring high school students to study Shakespeare, a state cannot reasonably require its teacher-preparation programs to assure that future teachers are even acquainted with the Bard.

K-12 documents cluttered with unteachable standards or process objectives let everyone off the hook, especially university faculty. Teacher-training institutions seeking approval from the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), for example, need show only that the content knowledge required of candidates in their English education programs meets NCTE standards (which have no specific content) and the content standards in the state's licensure regulations (which are normally tied to the state's K-12 standards). Until the English faculty in its institutions of higher education can be held responsible for preparing prospective English teachers who are capable of addressing content-rich and content-specific K-12 literature standards, a state may not see significant increases in student achievement in reading beyond those now obtainable in the elementary grades, thanks to strong beginning reading standards and associated assessments.

Recommendations

First, states that have not already done so should ask experienced and knowledgeable high school English teachers to revise their literature and reading standards for grades 5 to 12. These teachers should be asked to draft content-specific and content-rich standards that are teachable and that provide a clear outline of the essential substantive content of the English curriculum. What is needed is not a restored 1950s curriculum, but an updated curriculum that gives teachers choices among works of merit from around the world while highlighting culturally and historically significant works of classical, British, and American literature.

Second, states should require at least one standard on the history and nature of the English language. A standard as clear as California's "understand the most important points in the history of the English language and use common word origins to determine the historical influences on English word meanings" could appear in every document in a vocabulary strand.

Third, states should require grade-specific or course-specific standards covering all areas of the English language arts in high school based on the reasonable assumption that significant intellectual growth occurs during the high school years. There is no way to show progress from grades 9 to 12 with only one set of standards for the end of high school or a single set for grade 10 alone.

Fourth, states should foster public discussion of the importance of literary study in the secondary English curriculum in conjunction with the findings of the June 2004 report by the National Endowment for the Arts.[6] What proportion of the English curriculum does literary study now occupy in their high schools? What proportion of the English curriculum do parents and others think it should occupy? What proportion of passages on state assessments should reflect literary study? Is literature education to be valued in our public schools? And, finally, who will want to teach high school English if the curriculum fails to emphasize literary study?

Fifth, the blueprints or specifications for state assessments should be public information and easily understandable. They should indicate not only how many items are on each test at each grade level, the kind of testing methods that are used (e.g., multiple choice, short answer, or open response), the strands that are assessed, and the number of reading passages used, but also the kinds of passages used and how they are weighted. Specific criteria for selecting reading passages should be disclosed. In addition, enough test passages should be released every year to enable the public to determine their quality and monitor whether that quality is maintained over the years.

Sixth, states should require all prospective teachers of elementary, special education, and English language learner students to pass (with a high cut score) a subject-matter test of reading pedagogy that reflects the research-based framework in Reading First.

Finally, states should require teachable content-specific and content-rich literature standards for grades 5 to 12 to be addressed in teacher licensing regulations, subject-matter tests, student teaching evaluations, and continuing professional development. Until they do, the theories on the teaching of literature now spawning unteachable literature standards for K-12 will continue to influence prospective K-12 teachers in their academic coursework.

Indeed, the greatest and least costly benefits of high-quality K-12 standards will come from upgrading courses in a state's English departments and education schools, rather than from remediating K-12 students and the current teaching force. But it is here that the fiercest political battles may also be waged. It will be far harder to academically reconstruct undergraduate courses in departments of English and education than it will be to construct high-quality K-12 literature and reading standards. Yet these are the battles that most need to be fought.[7]

Endnotes

[1] In my chapter "Can a state department of education increase teacher quality? Lessons learned in Massachusetts," in D. Ravitch (Ed.), Brookings papers on education policy, 2004 (pp. 131-180). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, I include a diagram showing the centrality of a state's K-12 standards for every component of its public education system.

[2] I would credit the increase in the ratings on research processes to the stampede to incorporate technology into K-12 and teacher training. The availability of computers with access to the Internet in most schools and homes has given a new life to the "research" paper, however skeptical one might be about the quality of the information students obtain and their ability to evaluate it.

[3] Sandra Huang, Yun Yi, and Kati Haycock. *Interpret With Caution: The First State Title II Reports on the Quality of Teacher Preparation*. The Education Trust, June, 2002).

[4] Ruth Mitchell and Patte Barthe. "How Teacher Licensing Tests Fall Short," *Thinking K-16*, Spring (1999). See also *Not Good Enough: A Content Analysis of Teacher Licensing Exams*, a report issued by the Education Trust in Summer 1999. Surprisingly, a volume of essays on the role of licensure tests in improving teacher quality published by the National Research Council in 2001 does not address either the difficulty level of current teacher tests or the level of the cut scores established by the states using them. The editors and authors of the chapters in this volume dwell only on psychometric issues as if these are all that matter in a teacher test (Committee on Assessment and Teacher Quality, *Testing Teacher Candidates: The Role of Licensure Tests in Improving Teacher Quality*. National Research Council. (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001).

[5] *Ready or Not: Creating a High School Diploma That Counts*, the product of the American Diploma Project reflecting a partnership of Achieve, Inc., The Education Trust, and the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation, Washington, DC: Achieve, Inc., 2003.

[6] National Endowment for the Arts, *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*, June 2004. http://www.nea.gov/pub/ReadingAtRisk.pdf

[7] Descriptions of different versions of a reader response approach may be found in Louise Rosenblatt, "Literary Theory," in J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. Squire, and J. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts*, second edition, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003, pp. 67-73, and Alan Purves and Gordon Pradl, "The School Subject Literature," in J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. Squire, and J. Jensen (Eds.), *Handbook of Research on Teaching the English Language Arts*, second edition, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2003, pp. 848-856.

Appendix A: The 2005 Review Form and Methodology

This review form differs slightly from the form used in the 1997 and 2000 reviews. (See page 92 for more information on the differences.)

The 2005 Review Form

A. Purposes and expectations for the standards

1. The document is written in prose that the general public can understand.

0 Educational jargon is used throughout.

1 Educational jargon is used to some extent.

3 For the most part, the document is written in readable English prose.

4 The document is written in prose the general public can easily understand.

2. It expects students to become literate American citizens.

0 Citizenship is not mentioned at all.

1 Citizenship is mentioned as global in nature but not specifically American.

3 Citizenship is mentioned with reference to participation in civic life, in a democracy, or in society, but without cultural markers in the standards (such as American literature) or reference to a particular (such as "our") democracy or society, leaving national identity vague.

4 Making national identity clear, the document includes such language as "American citizens" or "citizenship," or refers to full participation as citizens in our national civic life, or contains references to our seminal political documents.

3. It expects explicit and systematic instruction in decoding skills in the primary grades as well as the use of various comprehension strategies and meaningful reading materials.

0 Phonics or decoding skills are not mentioned at all.

1 Phonics or decoding skills are mentioned only in the context of other strategies so that it is unlikely they are addressed independently or systematically.

3 Phonics or decoding skills are given a separate bullet or statement but nothing on explicit and systematic teaching and independence from contextual approaches.

4 Explicit and systematic instruction in decoding skills is spelled out as such.

4. It expects students to read independently on a daily basis through the grades, suggesting how much reading students should do per year as a minimum, with some guidance about its quality.

0 Independent reading isn't mentioned at all.

1 Regular independent reading is recommended, but not quality or quantity.

3 Quality or quantity of independent reading is indicated in some way (e.g., by a list of recommended books or by a recommended number of words or books per grade).

4 Quality and quantity per grade or grade span are indicated in some way.

5. *It acknowledges the existence of a corpus of literary works called American literature, however diverse its origins and the social groups it portrays.*

0 American literature is not mentioned as such in any way.

1 American literature is mentioned, but no more than that.

3 American literature is mentioned in an inclusive way.

4 American literature is described in an inclusive way with illustrative works or authors.

6. *State tests are based, at least partly, on the standards, with blueprints distinguishing literary from non-literary reading and weights showing the increasing importance of literary study through the grades.*

0 State tests are not based, even partly, on state standards.

1 In state tests based on state standards, literary reading is distinguished from non-literary reading but is weighted less than non-literary reading at higher grade levels.

3 Literary reading is weighted about equally with non-literary reading at higher grade levels.

4 The weight for literary reading is greater than the weight for non-literary reading at higher grade levels.

B. Organization of the standards

1. *They are presented grade by grade or in spans of no more than two grade levels.*

0 The standards are organized by spans of more than two grade levels.

1 The standards are organized in a way that does not warrant a 3 or 4

3 The standards are presented grade by grade or by two-year grade spans until grade 8, with only one set for the four years of high school.

4 The standards are presented grade by grade or by spans of two grade levels.

2. *They are grouped in categories reflecting coherent bodies of scholarship or research in reading and the English language arts.*

0 They are mostly grouped in unique or incoherent categories (e.g., standards for reading are grouped with those for literary study or with listening; standards for writing are grouped with those for speaking; categories reflect rhetorical or pedagogical strategies).

1 Some categories reflect coherent bodies of scholarship or research.

3 Most but not all categories reflect coherent bodies of scholarship or research.

4 All categories reflect coherent bodies of scholarship or research.

3. *They distinguish higher-level concepts and skills from lower-level skills, if lower-level skills are mentioned.*

0 The standards mix higher- and lower-level concepts and skills indiscriminately.

1 The standards distinguish higher- and lower-level concepts and skills, but the distinction is not discriminating.

3 For the most part, the standards discriminatingly distinguish higher- and lower-level concepts and skills.

4 The standards distinguish clearly higher- and lower-level concepts and skills.

C. Disciplinary coverage of the standards

1. *The standards clearly address listening and speaking. They include use of various discussion purposes and roles, how to participate in discussion, desirable qualities in formal speaking, and use of established as well as peer-generated or personal criteria for evaluating formal and informal speech.*

   0 Standards for listening and speaking are not included.

   1 Some of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   3 Most but not all of the above areas are addressed adequately.

   4 All of the above areas are adequately covered.

2. *The standards clearly address reading to understand and use information through the grades. They include progressive development of reading skills and vocabularies and knowledge and use of a variety of textual features, genres, and reading strategies for academic, occupational, and civic purposes.*

   0 Standards for informational (including technical, persuasive, and procedural) reading are not distinguished as such.

   1 Some of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   3 Most of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   4 All of the above areas are adequately covered.

3. *The standards clearly address the reading, interpretation, and critical evaluation of literature. They include knowledge of diverse literary elements and genres, different kinds of literary responses, and use of a variety of interpretive and critical lenses. They also specify those key authors, works, and literary traditions in American literature and in the literary and civic heritage of English-speaking people that all students should study because of their literary quality and cultural significance.*

   0 Standards for literary study are not distinguished as such.

   1 Some of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   3 Most of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   4 All of the above areas are adequately covered.

4. *The standards clearly address writing for communication and expression. They include use of writing processes, established as well as peer-generated or personal evaluation criteria, and various rhetorical elements, strategies, genres, and modes of organization.*

   0 Standards for writing for communication and expression are not distinguished as such.

   1 Some of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   3 Most of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   4 All of the above areas are adequately covered.

5. *The standards clearly address oral and written language conventions. They include standard English conventions for sentence structure, spelling, usage, penmanship, capitalization, and punctuation.*

   0 Standards for oral and written language conventions are not distinguished as such.

   1 Some of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

   3 Most of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

4 All of the above areas are adequately covered.

6. *The standards clearly address the nature, dynamics, and history of the English language. They include the nature of its vocabulary, its structure (grammar), the evolution of its oral and written forms, and the distinction between the variability of its oral forms and the relative permanence of its written form today.*

0 Standards for this area are not distinguished as such.

1 Some of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

3 Most of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

4 All of the above areas are adequately covered.

7. *The standards clearly address research processes, including developing questions and locating, understanding, evaluating, synthesizing, and using various sources of information for reading, writing, and speaking assignments. These sources include dictionaries, thesauruses, other reference materials, observations of empirical phenomena, interviews with informants, and computer databases.*

0 Standards for the research processes are not distinguished as such.

1 Some of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

3 Most of the above areas for coverage are addressed adequately.

4 All of the above areas are adequately covered.

D. Quality of the standards

1. *They are clear and specific.*

0 They are vague and filled with jargon.

1 To some extent, clear and specific.

3 For the most part, clear and jargon-free.

4 Overall, clear and jargon-free.

2. *They are measurable (i.e., they can lead to observable, comparable results across students and schools).*

0 Expressed in ways that are not measurable (e.g., use unmeasurable verbs like "explore," "investigate," "inquire," or ask for personal experience).

1 To some extent only.

3 Most are measurable.

4 Overall, they can be measured or rated reliably.

3. *They are of increasing intellectual difficulty at each higher educational level and cover all important aspects of learning in the area they address.*

0 For the most part, they show little change in difficulty over the grades, or are frequently repeated for many grades at a time.

1 Increases in difficulty are reflected to some extent by substantive changes in the wording of a standard or by new standards pointing to more difficult content.

3 Most of the standards show meaningful increases in difficulty over the grades and address the important aspects of learning in the area.

4 Overall, the standards show educationally appropriate and meaningful increases in difficulty over the grades and cover all important aspects of learning in the area.

4. They index or illustrate growth through the grades for reading by referring to specific reading levels or to titles of specific literary or academic works as examples of a reading level.

0 The reading and/or literature standards contain no clue as to reading level other than something like "using texts at the appropriate grade level."

1 The reading and/or literature standards are occasionally accompanied by examples of specific texts or authors.

3 The reading and/or literature standards are frequently accompanied by examples of specific texts or authors.

4 The reading and/or literature standards are almost always accompanied by examples of specific texts and/or authors, or reading lists divided into educational levels.

5. They illustrate growth expected through the grades for writing with reference to examples and rating criteria, in the standards document or in other documents.

0 The document provides no criteria or samples for the quality of writing expected at assessed grades.

1 The document provides criteria or examples for the quality of writing expected at most but not all assessed grades through high school.

3 The document provides criteria or examples for the quality of writing expected at all assessed grades through high school.

4 The document provides examples and criteria for the quality of writing expected at all assessed grades, including high school.

6. Their overall contents are sufficiently specific, comprehensive, and demanding to lead to a common core of high academic expectations for all students in the state.

0 No. They cannot lead to a common core of high academic expectations.

1 To some extent only.

3 For the most part.

4 Yes.

E. Requirements or expectations that impede learning

(Scores in this section are subtracted from the total of the other scores to obtain the state's final total score.)

1. The reading/literature standards expect students to relate what they read to their life experiences.

0 The document does not state any expectation for students to relate what they read to their life experiences except possibly in the primary grades.

-1 The document seems to expect students to relate what they read to their life experiences over the grades.

-3 The document expects students to relate what they read to their life experiences but with some distinctions across grade levels.

-4 The standards expect students to relate what they read to their life experiences, with no distinctions across grade levels or qualifications to limit the expectation.

2. The reading/literature standards expect reading materials to address contemporary social issues.

0 The document indicates that what students read as school assignments should be chosen on the basis of their literary qualities or their potential to promote students' understanding of more intellectually complex ideas and language.

-1 The standards do not state any expectation that the literary and non-literary texts that students read as class assignments should address contemporary social issues.

-3 The standards expect some of the literary and non-literary texts that students read as school assignments to address contemporary social issues.

-4 The standards expect the literary and non-literary texts that students read as school assignments to address contemporary social issues.

3. The document implies that all texts, literary and non-literary, are susceptible to an infinite number of interpretations and that all points of view or interpretations are equally valid regardless of the logic, accuracy, and adequacy of supporting evidence.

0 The standards make clear that interpretations of non-literary texts should be supported by logical reasoning, accurate facts, and adequate evidence and similarly address contradictory or other interpretations.

-1 The standards indicate in some way that interpretations of any text must be consistent with what the author wrote and cognizant of counter-evidence.

-3 The document implies that all literary texts are susceptible of an infinite number of equally valid interpretations.

-4 The document or the standards contains statements to that effect.

4. The examples of classroom activities or student writing offered with the standards or in documents designed to accompany them are politically slanted or reflect an attempt to manipulate students' feelings, thinking, or behavior.

0 The examples of classroom activities or student writing offered with the standards or in documents accompanying them are not ideologically slanted and fairly illustrate a range of views by students on issues they may address.

-1 For the most part, they are free of bias or attempted manipulation of students by their teachers.

-3 Many of the examples show political bias or attempted manipulation of students by their teachers.

-4 Most if not all of the examples show political bias or attempted manipulation of students by their teachers.

5. The standards teach moral or social dogma.

0 The standards (or surrounding text) do not attempt to teach moral or social dogma.

-1 For the most part, they do not attempt to teach moral or social dogma.

-3 Moral or social dogma creeps through in various places.

-4 The standards or the texts surrounding them clearly propound moral or social dogma.

6. The document explicitly or implicitly recommends specific pedagogical strategies or one philosophy for all teachers to follow.

0 The document either recommends pedagogical strategies spanning the entire range of approaches, or does not recommend any specific pedagogical approaches.

-1 The document implicitly recommends specific approaches in specific areas.

-3 The document explicitly recommends specific approaches in certain areas.

-4 The document clearly recommends an overarching pedagogical philosophy.

F. Further uses of the standards*

1. *For program approval, the state department of education requires teacher-training programs to include coursework that shows pre-service teachers how to teach to its K-12 standards.*

   0 The state's licensing regulations do not require teacher-training programs to include coursework showing prospective teachers how to teach to its K-12 standards.

   1 The state's licensing regulations require teacher-training programs to show pre-service teachers how to teach to its K-12 standards.

   3 The state's standards documents are listed as required readings on the syllabus in required coursework that addresses them.

   4 The state department of education requires teacher-training programs to distribute copies of the relevant K-12 standards in required coursework on them.

2. *For program approval, the state department of education requires teacher-training programs to show that pre-service teachers are acquiring the subject matter knowledge needed for teaching to the state's K-12 literature and composition standards in their arts and sciences courses.*

   0 Teacher-training programs are not required to show how prospective teachers acquire the subject matter knowledge needed for teaching to the state's K-12 literature and composition standards in their arts and sciences courses.

   1 Teacher-training programs are required to show how prospective teachers acquire the subject matter knowledge needed for teaching to the state's K-12 standards.

   3 Teacher-training programs are required to indicate and briefly describe the relevant literature and composition courses taken in the arts and sciences.

   4 Teacher-training programs must provide copies of the syllabi used in these courses and show where knowledge for teaching to the state's K-12 standards is acquired.

3. *The state department of education requires student teachers to use the state's K-12 reading and English language arts standards in developing and teaching lessons in practica for licensure in any position addressing them.*

   0 The state department of education doesn't have regulations requiring this.

   1 The state's licensing regulations require teacher-training programs to evaluate whether and how student teachers use the state's K-12 reading and English language arts standards as teaching goals in their lesson plans.

   3 For program approval, state department of education staff examine student teacher evaluation forms and a sampling of actual evaluations to determine whether and how student teachers are being evaluated for their use of the state's K-12 reading and English language arts standards in planning and teaching a lesson.

   4 For program approval, state department of education staff examine a sampling of student teachers' lesson plans to determine their use of K-12 reading and English language arts standards.

4. *The state department of education requires the subject matter test(s) that pre-service teachers take for licensure to be informed by the state's K-12 standards. There is a separate subject-matter test for reading pedagogy.*

   0 The K-12 standards do not inform the subject-matter test(s) for teachers, or there are no subject-matter tests for teachers.

   1 The standards inform the subject-matter test(s) for teachers on state-specific tests.

3 The objectives for the teacher test(s) reflect the coursework needed in reading and in the arts and sciences to address the state's K-12 standards in the classroom.

4 There is a separate subject-matter test for reading pedagogy.

5. The state department of education requires use of the state's K-12 standards as objectives in professional development for teachers in reading pedagogy, literary study, composition teaching, and research processes.

0 The standards are not used to guide professional development.

1 Guidelines suggest or expect use of the standards for professional development.

3 Guidelines require all state-funded professional development activities and non-state-funded activities that the schools report as "high-quality" professional development to address state standards.

4 The state department of education monitors all state-funded professional development activities and all non-state-funded activities reported as "high-quality" professional development by the schools to ensure they address state standards.

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*The ratings for the criteria in Section F were not included in calculating a state's grade point average and determining its final grade.

Changes in Criteria and Rubrics

This review form differs from the form used in 1997 and 2000 in two ways. First, some of the criteria are different. In Section A, I dropped several criteria, primarily because the information addressing them was available elsewhere in the review form. Further, since all states are now required to have state assessments in E/LA/R, I altered the criterion dealing with whether state standards are used to guide state assessments to include how they informed the tests. Sections B and C are nearly identical to what they were in 1997 and 2000. I also dropped two criteria from Section D and one from section E to reduce redundancy.

Second, the scoring rubrics for most criteria are different. In the earlier review, the rubrics for all criteria were as follows: 0 = no, 1 = to some extent, 2 = unclear, 3 = to a large extent, and 4 = yes. For the 2004 review, individualized rubrics were developed for each criterion to establish more clearly what the numbers on the rating scale meant. As in 1997 and 2000, a 2 was used sparingly and continued to mean "unclear." A state could earn a 2 on any criterion if the information we had did not allow me to readily assign a 1 or a 3, given what the rubric for a 1 or a 3 designated. The use of these more individualized rubrics often led to a stricter interpretation of what was in a document and to a lower rating on a criterion on which the state may have received a higher rating in an earlier review, even when the current and previous document were similar or identical. This was particularly the case for a number of criteria in Sections A, B, and E.

Methodology

To ensure that we had the most up-to-date and complete standards information, Fordham Foundation staff searched each state department of education website and gathered all of the standards documents that were online and available to the public. They then contacted staff at each state department of education to ensure that the information provided on the state's website was up-to-date and to ask if we were missing any pertinent standards information. In addition, Fordham staff asked the state department of education staff pointed questions to determine whether there were other standards documents that related to any of the 34 criteria that we should include in our review. Once all of the relevant information was collected, Fordham staff sent me complete standards information

for 49 states and the District of Columbia. If I had questions about the completeness of the material as I read through and rated the materials that Fordham staff had sent to me, they would make further calls to the department of education staff and/or search the state's website for the information. We reviewed all documents brought to our attention, as well as others on the state's web site that seemed relevant. A log was kept for each state indicating the names of the department of education staff contacted, the dates, their replies or lack of reply, and any other relevant information.

Many documents on many state websites are not dated and contain no indication as to when they were approved by a state board of education or other responsible authority. In such cases, it was not clear whether we were looking at the most recent document on a topic. In some cases, we were not able to receive information from the most knowledgeable informant in a department. For a few states, and sometimes for a few items, we received no information at all. If it should turn out that we missed a relevant document, it is because it was not readily identifiable as relevant to the review, or it was in draft form and not brought to our attention.

To increase the reliability of my ratings, I secured the services of Carol Jago as a co-rater. A high school English teacher in Santa Monica, Calif., and editor of the *California English Journal*, Jago rated 25 states' standards, all of which had been randomly selected and assigned to her. Similar to the procedures used in a holistic assessment of writing, we discussed the differences in our ratings for the first ten or so sets of documents to work out common interpretations of the criteria and clarify both the rubrics and the criteria. Once discrepancies were generally no more than one point apart, and our overall total scores were similar, no further adjustments were made. As I continued rating state documents, I would compare my results to hers to make sure our ratings were consistent. Jago also prepared a first draft of the summary for the states she had rated.

Once all the state documents had been rated, both Fordham staff and I checked the ratings for each criterion for consistency across the 50 states. We then added up the total number of points each state had earned and divided by 28 to determine the state's grade point average. After the scale for the grading system was worked out, each state was assigned a letter grade according to the scale shown below.

Scale Used for Converting a Grade Point Average to a Letter Grade
3.5-4.0 = A
2.7-3.49 = B
1.71-2.69 = C
1.3-1.7 = D
1.29 and below = F

Note that the scale used for the 1997 and 2000 reviews of E/LA/R standards is different. In 1997 and 2000, when the standards landscape was profoundly different, states that had E/LA/R standards were given 10 extra points—a bonus that was added to a state's total point score before we calculated the state's average. Now, since NCLB requires all states to have E/LA/R standards, we no longer felt it was appropriate to reward states for doing the bare minimum. In order to help us make comparisons across the years, we recalculated each state's final score in 1997 and 2000 and calculated a new grade point average. This readjusted grade point average and its corresponding letter grade in this scale were used in all of our comparison charts in this review.

Appendix B:
Criteria, Rationales, and State Results

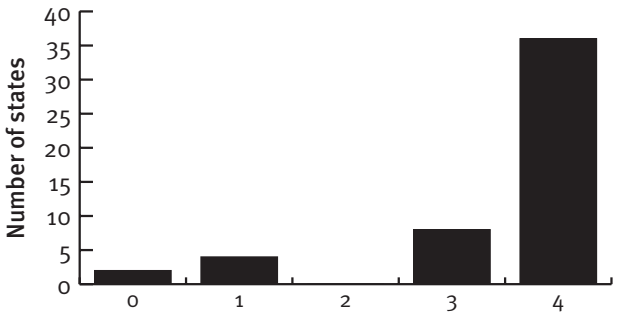
This appendix provides the rationale and a summary of the ratings for each criterion in Sections A to E across all 50 states including the District of Columbia. I generally use the word "standard" to designate an academic objective, regardless of the particular term used in a state document. Many states use such terms as "performance indicators," "benchmarks," "objectives," or "grade-level expectations" as well as "content standards" or "performance standards" to indicate their academic standards. For the specific terminology used by a state, the reader should consult its documents.

A. Purposes and expectations for the standards

Criterion A-1. The document is written in prose that the general public can understand.

Rationale: A document purporting to spell out what students should know and be able to do in the English language arts from kindergarten to grade 12 should be written in a prose style that can be read without difficulty by the general public. A document studded with academic or educational jargon will not be intelligible to the general public, nor does it show respect for them.

Criterion A-1: The document is written in prose that the general public can understand.

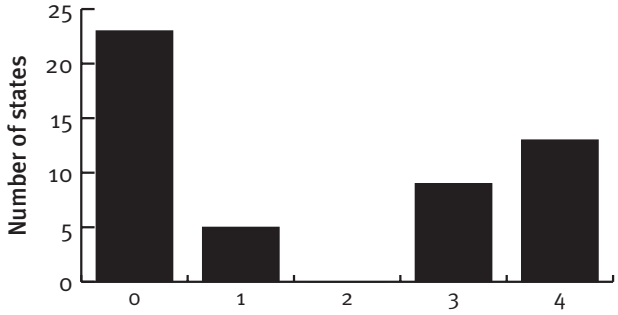


Results: Fortunately, the vast majority of states have documents that are relatively free from excessive educational jargon and therefore can be read relatively easily by the general public. All but 14 states earned a 4 on this criterion. Eight others earned a 3; of these, several are organized in such a confusing way (e.g., Mississippi), or are so cumbersome in length (e.g., Kansas), or are in so many separate pieces on the web (e.g., Kentucky), that it is difficult to deduce without a great deal of study what the state's standards actually are. Of the six earning lower than a 3 or 4, several are so heavily laden with educational jargon or uninterpretable prose (e.g., Connecticut, Michigan, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Washington) that they are apt to be impenetrable by the average citizen. One (Wyoming) is so poorly written that, in our view, it should not have been approved as a public document.

Criterion A-2. The document expects students to become literate American citizens.

Rationale: A traditional goal of the English language arts curriculum has been to develop in future voters the speaking, reading, and writing skills they will need for active participation in this country's civic culture. This goal includes development of the ability to read seminal political documents as well as other historical and contemporary materials that inform participation in our particular democracy. This goal also includes cultivating their civic identity—a sense of membership in their civic communities—as well as exposing them to the literary and non-literary texts that reflect the evolution of America's basic political principles and the imagination and passion of its most historically and culturally significant writers.

Criterion A-2: It expects students to become literate American citizens.

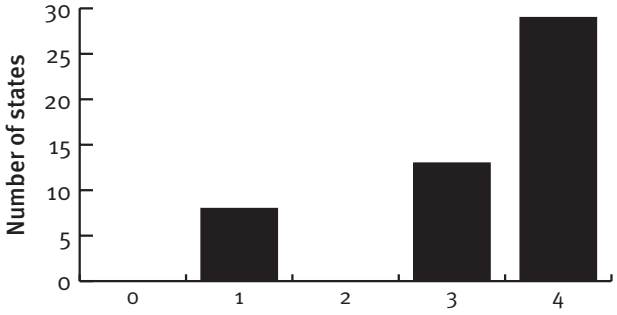


Results: Sadly, only 13 states earned a 4 on this criterion; they made national identity clear. Another nine earned a 3; they see active citizenship as a goal of the English language arts, but it is not clear in what land today's students are to be tomorrow's active citizens. More than half (28) of the states do not indicate that a major purpose of the E/LA/R curriculum is to ensure that students acquire the reading, writing, and speaking skills needed for active participation in our civic life. In five of these 28, citizenship is "global"; in the other 23, it is not mentioned at all. The failure of most states to specify the development of a literate citizenry for informed and responsible participation in this country's civic life parallels the failure of half of the states to acknowledge the existence of American literature for criterion 5.

Criterion A-3. It expects explicit and systematic instruction in decoding skills in the primary grades as well as the use of various comprehension strategies and meaningful reading materials.

Rationale: The research evidence has been consistent for decades on the benefits of instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics; most students need to acquire decoding skills to become fluent readers and need explicit and systematic instruction in order to do so. A standards document should make clear that students will receive systematic instruction in decoding skills, followed by opportunities to apply those skills to whole words, alone and in texts with mostly decodable words. It is not enough to give students instruction in the letter-sound relationships that happen to be in the books they choose to read; this means that phonics instruction will be haphazard, not systematic. Nor is it enough to provide practice only in the context of a story they are reading; students need to practice applying decoding skills to isolated decodable words (words with consistent sound to symbol relationships) and then to decodable texts so they learn how to identify words in context quickly without depending on the context. A major purpose of phonics instruction is to reduce students' dependence on context for identifying unfamiliar words in print so they can read faster and more fluently.

Criterion A-3: It expects explicit and systematic instruction in decoding skills in the primary grades as well as the use of various comprehension strategies and meaningful reading materials.

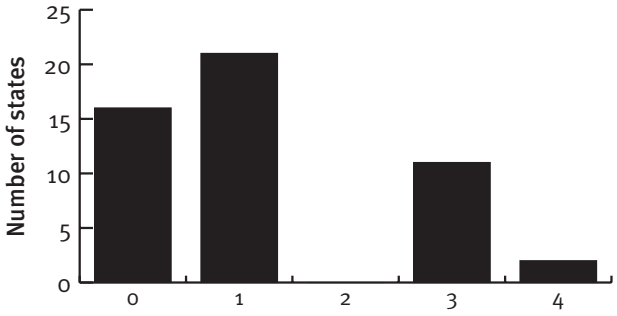


Results: There has been a dramatic improvement on this criterion, probably owing to the review by the National Reading Panel of high-quality research on reading and Reading First's requirements for K-3. Many states have added unambiguous and thorough grade level expectations in beginning reading to their original standards or have revised them altogether. Twenty-nine states now earn a rating of 4 because it is clear that their students are to receive systematic instruction in decoding skills. Another 13 received a 3, chiefly because it was not clear that instruction in decoding skills would be systematic. Eight states earned a 1, in some cases because their reading standards begin in grade 3 or 4 and it was not clear what was taking place in K-2. Three or four of these states seem to be ignoring what sound research studies have consistently found to be important in beginning reading pedagogy.

Criterion A-4. It expects students to read independently on a daily basis through the grades, suggesting how much reading students should do per year as a minimum, with some guidance about its quality.

Rationale: The few academic hours students spend in school each day for 180 days per year are hardly sufficient for developing advanced reading and writing skills. All students should be expected to read daily on their own, in and out of school. They should also be given guidance on what constitutes quality in reading materials and how much they should try to read on a daily basis.

Criterion A-4: It expects students to read independently on a daily basis through the grades, suggesting how much reading students should do per year as a minimum, with some guidance about its quality.



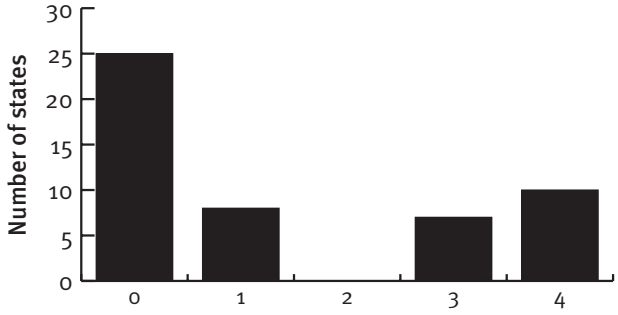
Results: Only two states—California and Georgia—earned a 4 because their documents indicate both the quantity and quality of independent reading that students are required to do. Another 11 states earned a 3 for indicating

either quality or quantity but not both. Twenty-one other states say they want independent reading, thus earning a 1, but are apparently reluctant to define or illustrate the quality expected in any way or to recommend how much independent reading (in numbers of words or books read) could be expected from grade to grade. Astonishingly, 16 states never even mention the expectation.

Criterion A-5. It acknowledges the existence of a corpus of literary works called American literature, however diverse its origins and the social groups it portrays.

Rationale: Almost every nation can point to distinctive works, authors, literary periods, and literary traditions of its own, in addition to key works or authors from other cultures that have influenced its own writers. Because the United States has political institutions, traditions, beliefs, and values that differ in many ways from those of other English-speaking countries, it is reasonable to expect an English language arts standards document in this country to acknowledge and pay special attention to the literary works specific to this country's intellectual and cultural history, i.e., American literature, a term that properly includes all the literature written in English by those born or living within the borders of the United States, regardless of their religious, ethnic, or racial background.

Criterion A-5: The standards acknowledge the existence of a corpus of literary works called American literature, however diverse its origins and the social groups it portrays.



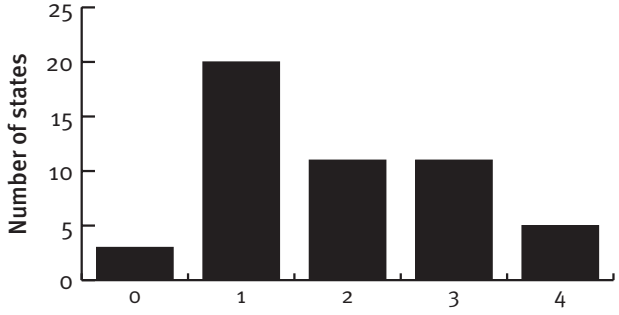
Results: Only 10 states describe American literature in an inclusive way with illustrative works and authors, thus earning a 4 on this criterion. Another seven states describe it in an inclusive way but do not provide illustrative works and authors. Yet another eight acknowledge the existence of American literature once, but no more. Why are the other 25 states unable or unwilling to specify in their standards, even in the introduction to those standards, the one particular body of literature most citizens expect students in their public schools to study? (States were not required to include reading lists to meet this criterion.)

Criterion A-6. State tests are based, at least partly, on the standards, with blueprints distinguishing literary from non-literary reading and weights showing the increasing importance of literary study through the grades.

Rationale: In the 2000 review, this criterion was intended to determine whether a state's standards were used for state assessments. Since all states are now required by NCLB to assess their students using state standards, the criterion was altered to address two issues that a state's reading assessment must now resolve: whether to distinguish literary from non-literary reading, and how to weight these two broad types of reading. The weights usually reflect the number of passages of each type that appears on a test. Blueprints or test specifications should distinguish literary from non-literary reading because each serves different purposes, entails different reading processes, and evokes different respons-

es. More important, literary study should receive increasing weight through the grades relative to non-literary reading because it is (or should be) the major content of the English class, the only class in which literature is taught as such. The reading of informational or functional texts is appropriately emphasized in other school subjects.

Criterion A-6: State tests are based, at least partly, on the standards.



Results: Only five states get gold stars; according to state officials or the state's assessment blueprints, their high school assessments weight literary reading more than informational reading broadly conceived. Another 11 get a silver star: They seem to weight the two broad types equally at the high school level. Yet another 11 states were rated 2 for one of several reasons: (1) They do not make their test blueprints available to the public, (2) the information in their blueprints or given to us by an informant was unclear, (3) the weights change from year to year, or (4) they have not yet determined the weights. Unfortunately, 20 states earned a 1. It is not clear to what extent high school English teachers in these states have participated in discussions about the weights accorded the two types of passages on state reading tests for which they are held accountable, but it is difficult to believe that in these 20 states such teachers would prefer a lower weight for literary reading than for informational reading. Three other states earned a 0 (Kansas and the District of Columbia gave us no information, and Michigan does not distinguish literary from non-literary reading in its state assessments).

Section B: Organization of the standards

Criterion B-1. Standards are presented grade by grade or in spans of no more than two grade levels.

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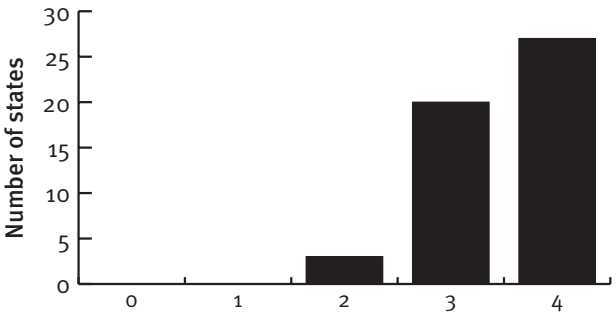


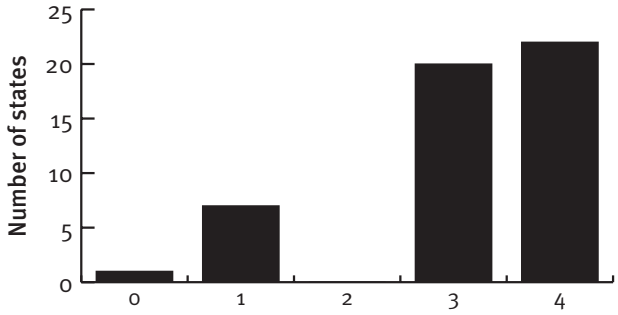
Rationale: This criterion differs from 2000, when a state could earn a 4 if its standards were presented at three levels (elementary, middle, and high school). For this review, my expectations have risen, primarily because standards covering such a broad span of grades are now understood to be inadequate as a guide to teachers of particular grades. Wise states have by now developed grade-by-grade expectations, at least from grades 3 to 8. Some have developed grade-specific expectations for K to 8, K to 10, or K to 12. The rubrics now indicate that a state must have at least two sets of standards at the high school level (as well as grade-by-grade standards or standards spanning no more two grade levels at a time at lower grade levels) to earn a rating of 4.

Results: Altogether, 27 states qualify for a 4. Another 20 received a 3, usually because they still have a single set of standards at the high school level. The remaining three received a rating of 2 for the particular mixture they present (e.g., Montana has grade-specific standards in reading from grades 3 to 8 and one set for high school, with standards for spans of more than two grades in other areas from K-12).

Criterion B-2. They are grouped in categories reflecting coherent bodies of scholarship or research in reading and English language arts.

Rationale: The organizing strands of an English language arts standards document should correspond to relevant areas of research and scholarship, some of which have histories going back centuries (e.g., the study of rhetoric, literary study, and study of the history and structure of various languages). More recent areas of research include reading and writing. Such groupings facilitate local curriculum development and help to show whether the standards cover all the needed areas. Gaps in coverage may arise when the title and content of a category bear little relationship to a recognized body of research or scholarship. Gaps also occur when a coherent body of research on which teachers traditionally draw is not reflected in the content of a category or is split into two or more categories, or when the standards in a category indiscriminately reflect two distinct bodies of research or scholarship (as sometimes happens when standards for literary and non-literary study are mixed in a broad category called "reading"). Needless to say, the standards within a strand should reflect the title of that strand and show coherence. States are not expected to organize their standards in any one way, but what they group together in substantive categories (often called strands) must be coherent and reflect recognized bodies of scholarship.

Criterion B-2: They are grouped in categories reflecting coherent bodies of scholarship or research in reading and the English language arts.



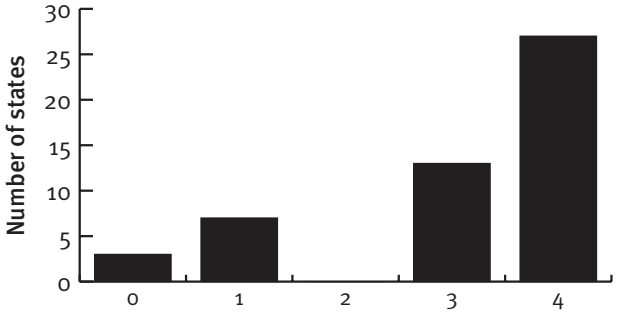
Results: Twenty-two states earned a 4 on this criterion because their conceptual framework for all standards from K to 12 reflects coherent bodies of research in the English language arts, including clear categories or subcategories for literary and non-literary reading. Another 20 states received a 3, often because their high school standards reflect a less coherent organizational scheme than their K-8 standards. Eight states received 1s or 0s. Most of those earn-

ing a 1 had several categories (or strands) that were incoherent and/or did not reflect recognized bodies of research or scholarship. New Mexico uniquely earned a 0 because all of its categories were incoherent.

Criterion B-3. They distinguish higher-level concepts and skills from lower-level skills, if lower-level skills are mentioned.

Rationale: Not only should standards be grouped in categories that reflect coherent bodies of scholarship, they should also be grouped within a category in ways that distinguish higher- from lower-level concepts and skills. When objectives under a broad category are haphazardly organized so that lower- and higher-level items are mixed, it conveys the wrong message to teachers and test makers. By using subcategories to distinguish important concepts such as a controlling idea, a focus, a hypothesis, or a thesis from such lower-order skills as language conventions, a standards document helps teachers and others aim for the higher-level concepts.

Criterion B-3: They distinguish higher level concepts and skills from lower level skills, if lower level skills are mentioned.



Results: Twenty-seven states earned a 4, indicating that they coherently organize objectives in each strand of their E/LA/R standards. Another 13 earned a 3, chiefly because some of their objectives are and some are not organized coherently. Seven states received a 1; their major categories and subcategories contain few coherent groups of objectives. And three states (Colorado, Maine, and West Virginia) received a 0, chiefly because they provide little more than an uneven list of objectives in each strand.

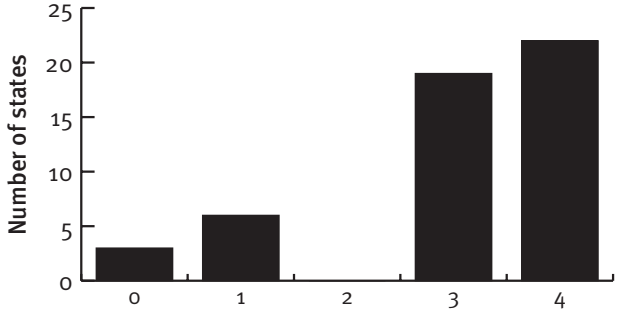
Section C: Disciplinary coverage of the standards

Criterion C-1. The standards clearly address listening and speaking. They include how to participate in group discussion for various purposes and in different roles, desirable qualities in formal speaking, and use of established as well as peer-generated or personal criteria for evaluating formal and informal speech.

Rationale: Students need skills for formal as well as informal listening and speaking. Standards should expect them to learn how to participate in group discussions that have diverse purposes (e.g., discussing a literary work or brainstorming solutions to a school problem) and rules, which are often determined by the age of the students and the purpose of the group. Participation includes learning how to take different roles (such as moderator, recorder, or timekeeper, or speaker and listener) and how to evaluate why some discussions are focused and productive while others are not. In addition, students should learn the features of formal presentations and learn how to use at least one set of estab-

lished criteria for evaluating formal speech (such as those from National Issues Forum or Toastmasters). It is also useful for students to develop and use peer-generated or personal criteria to evaluate individual or group talk.

Criterion C-1: The standards clearly address listening and speaking.

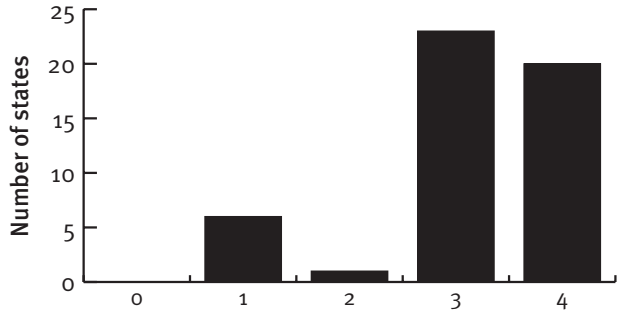


Results: Almost all states include standards for listening and speaking and address most of these areas adequately. Altogether, 22 states received a rating of 4. Another 19 received a 3, most often because they failed to require students to learn about and use established criteria for evaluating formal speaking. Only nine states do not address this area of the English language arts adequately or at all (Alaska, Colorado, Kansas, Kentucky, Montana, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Vermont).

Criterion C-2. The standards clearly address reading to understand and use information through the grades. They include progressive development of reading skills and vocabularies, and knowledge and use of a variety of textual features, genres, and reading strategies for academic, occupational, and civic purposes.

Rationale: Reading standards should address the development of all the major reading skills, including development of a reading vocabulary, the major component in reading comprehension, through systematic word study as well as through broad reading, listening, and dictionary use. Attention should be given to the beginning reading skills of phonemic awareness; phonics instruction; fluency, comprehension, and study strategies (such as skimming, questioning, summarizing, note-taking, and paraphrasing); customary features of an informational text (such as its central purpose, mode of organization, table of contents, or index); and different types of informational reading materials (such as newspapers or instructions for assembling an object).

Criterion C-2: The standards clearly address reading to understand and use information through the grades.

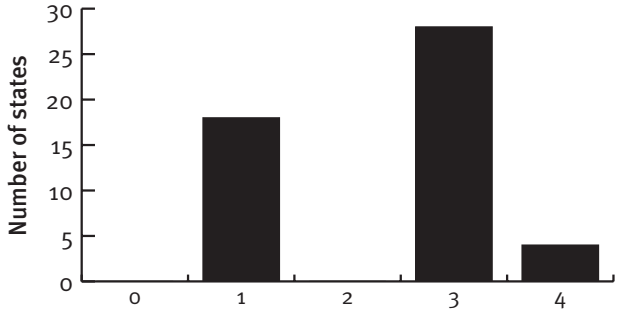


Results: Twenty states earned a 4 on this criterion. They have strong beginning reading standards, an explicit and strong vocabulary strand through the grades, and satisfactory coverage of secondary reading skills for different types of informational reading materials. Another 23 states received a 3, sometimes because the vocabulary strand they introduced in the elementary grades does not extend to high school. Seven states (Colorado, Connecticut, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, Tennessee, and Utah) received less than a 3, usually because of weak reading standards in the secondary grades.

Criterion C-3. The standards clearly address the reading, interpretation, and critical evaluation of literature. They include knowledge of diverse literary elements and genres, use of different kinds of literary responses, and use of a variety of interpretive and critical lenses. They also specify those key authors, works, and literary traditions in American literature and in the literary and civic heritage of English-speaking people that all students should study because of their literary quality and cultural significance.

Rationale: Standards in English language arts should outline the common core of literary knowledge that a state believes all students should gain from studying literature. Indeed, expectations for the content of American students' literary and non-literary knowledge should be as fleshed out as are expectations for the content of their history knowledge. American literature should be conceptualized in broad terms. Yet educators also have an obligation to offer the public an outline of the historically, intellectually, culturally, and aesthetically significant authors, works, literary periods, and literary traditions in the literary and civic heritage of English-speaking people with which these educators believe all students in their state should become familiar. By graduation, all students should have read, for example, selections by major writers of the American Renaissance and the Harlem Renaissance, selections from the Bible (as background to Western literature, literature in its own right, and a major source of literary allusion in Western literature), and selections by major writers in British literary history. They should also have read literary works in translation from many cultures around the world, especially from the ancient Greeks and Romans, which greatly influenced literature written in English. Names of key authors, works, and literary traditions or periods are just as necessary in an English language arts standards document as are names of significant people and periods in history standards.

Criterion C-3: The standards clearly address the reading, interpretation, and critical evaluation of literature.



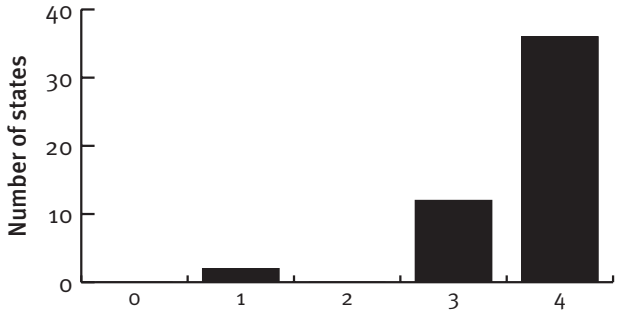
Results: Only four states earned a 4 (Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Massachusetts). Not only do they satisfactorily address the formal content of the high school literature curriculum, they also provide some literary specifics (key authors and/or works) in addition to specific periods and traditions, and/or provide a selective reading list to outline the substantive content of the high school literature curriculum. Another 28 states earned a 3. Although they

generally do well in outlining the formal content of the high school literature curriculum, they tend to provide few specifics. A large number of states (18) earned a rating of 1; they do not provide any content-rich or content-specific literature standards, nor do they adequately address the formal content of the literature curriculum. The major weakness here is a failure to address the elements and devices characteristic of the three major types of imaginative literature (fiction, poetry, and drama) clearly, equally, and systematically over the grades. Many states concentrate chiefly on fiction (or on narrative literature, as a few call it, thus overlooking other forms of fiction), with some attention to the elements of poetry but very little to dramatic literature. Some low-rated states also fail to separate literary from non-literary reading in areas where clear distinctions in strategies or skills can be made.

Criterion C-4. The standards clearly address writing for communication and expression. They include use of writing processes, established as well as peer-generated or personal evaluation criteria, and various rhetorical elements, strategies, genres, and modes of organization.

Rationale: All of these components are essential elements in composition instruction, and each includes key concepts, such as a focus or controlling idea, coherence, or a logical relationship among ideas. It is appropriate to expect students to demonstrate the use of various writing processes, but standards must also address the qualities of a completed piece of writing as evaluated by prescribed criteria. It is useful for students to develop and use peer-generated or personal criteria to evaluate their own and others' writing, but they must also become familiar with, use, and understand the rationale for prescribed criteria—either the teacher's or those of external evaluators.

Criterion C-4: The standards clearly address writing for communication and expression.

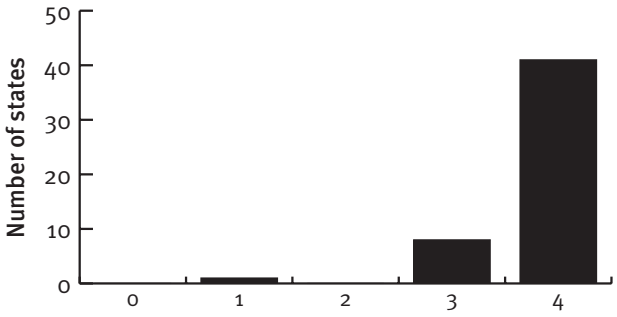


Results: A large majority of the states now provide standards addressing all the important elements in a writing curriculum. A total of 36 states earned a 4. Another 12 received a 3, chiefly because they fail to indicate some of the significant aspects of expository writing at the high school level. Two states (Montana and Nebraska) earned a 1.

Criterion C-5. The standards clearly address oral and written language conventions. They include standard English conventions for sentence structure, spelling, usage, penmanship, capitalization, and punctuation.

Rationale: Not every detail of usage or grammar needs mention in a standards document. But language conventions can be spelled out at different levels to show what growth in using them means. It is possible to show increases in expectations in broad categories such as parts of speech, types of clauses, or uses of the comma. With respect to penmanship, conventions do not refer to specific ways of forming letters, but to accepted ways to distinguish upper- from lower-case letters and to achieve overall legibility.

Criterion C-5: The standards clearly address oral and written language conventions.



Results: This turned out to be the best-covered area in most state standards, in part because states generally outline more standards in this area and because this area is frequently addressed with the most measurable objectives in the standards or assessment document. Forty-one states earned a 4. Another eight earned a 3, usually because they provided few different details over the grades. Montana earned a 1.

Criterion C-6. The standards clearly address the nature, dynamics, and history of the English language. They include the nature of its vocabulary and its structure (grammar); the evolution of its oral and written forms; and the distinction between the variability of its oral forms and the relative permanence of its written form today.

Rationale: Whether or not they are native speakers of English, all students should be expected to know something about the evolution and essential characteristics of the language they read, speak, and write, especially its extraordinary lexicon. Standards should address the reasons for oral dialects of English, differences between formal and informal uses of the language, and the relative uniformity of its written form throughout the world. They also should address the reasons why most (perhaps all) societies teach a standard form of their own language for written and formal oral use.

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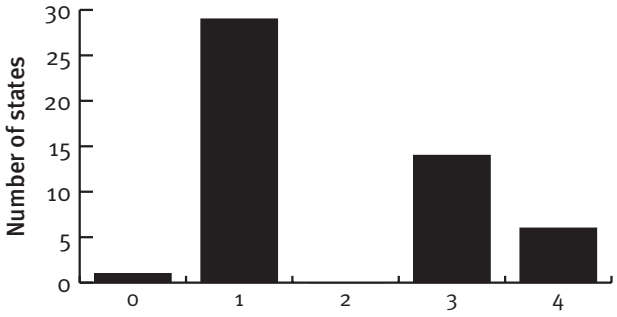

Results: On this criterion, a state earned a 1 if it expected grammar study in the strand on written language conventions and/or included study of word origins as part of the vocabulary section in the reading strand. It earned a 3 if, in addition, it expected attention to other things—influences on the English language such as Greek and Latin, differences between informal and formal language use, study of foreign words absorbed directly into literate English,

and the nature of and reasons for oral dialects. It earned a 4 if it expected study of the influence of historical events on the evolution of the English language, the influence of the English language on the rest of the world, and other broad topics. Unfortunately, just six states earned a 4, while 14 earned a 3. All but one (Kentucky) of the remaining 30 states earned a 1, which was not difficult to do. The failure of states to insist upon one clear standard on the history of the English language is probably related to their dual failure to specify American literature as a body of literature all students should study and to identify the ability to participate in American civic life as one of its major goals. The number of states receiving a rating of 0 or 1 on these criteria is similar.

Criterion C-7. The standards clearly address research processes, including developing questions and locating, understanding, evaluating, synthesizing, and using various sources of information for reading, writing, and speaking assignments. These sources include dictionaries, thesauruses, other reference materials, observations of empirical phenomena, interviews with informants, and computer databases.

Rationale: All students should be expected to be able to formulate suitable research questions for various areas of inquiry, acquire desired information independently, and evaluate its quality. Such abilities remain basic skills for informed citizenship. Students should also be expected to know how to use the facilities of a public library and the services of its librarians.

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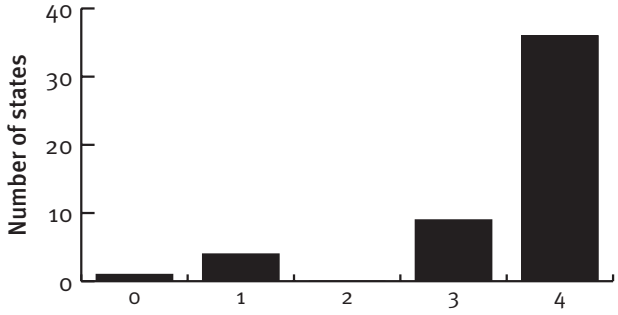


Results: The states showed considerable improvement since 1997. In 2005, a total of 36 earned a 4. Nine earned a 3, often because they did not address the development of research questions. Five states (Alaska, Hawaii, Kentucky, Michigan, and Montana) were rated 1 or 0, usually because research was not an identifiable substrand and was addressed skimpily—although it was addressed.

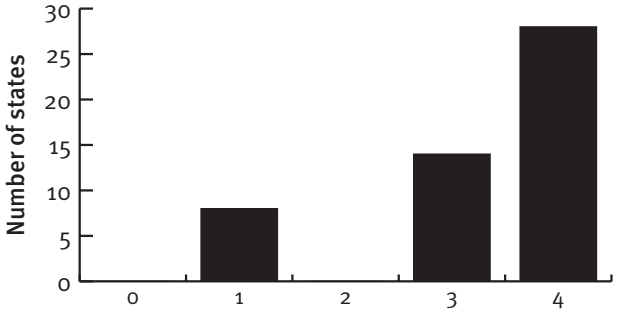
Section D: Quality of the standards

Criterion D-1. They are clear and specific.

Rationale: Standards must be clear and specific, enough so that teachers and parents as well as those developing assessment instruments know what is intended by them. Such objectives as "identify within nonfiction texts the dif-

ference between facts and opinions" or "effectively use the appropriate reference sources and materials necessary for gathering information" are clear, specific, and assessable. Specificity refers to the level of detail in a standard or objective. A standard can be so general or abstract as to permit an unlimited number of interpretations of what is intended. An example of such an objective is, "Select reading materials for a variety of purposes." A specific standard indicates content of some kind and an intellectual activity that engages with or focuses on it to facilitate its learning, such as "identify and interpret figurative language and literary devices (e.g., simile, metaphor, allusion)."

Criterion D-1: They are clear and specific.

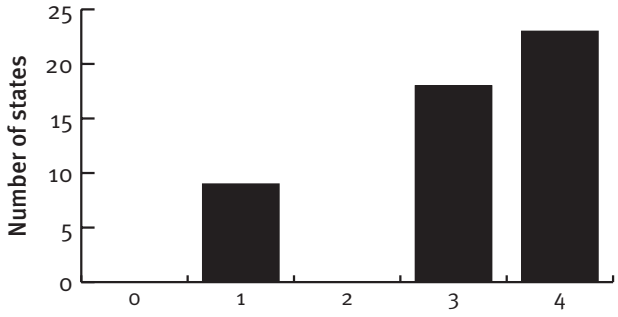


Results: More than half of the states (28) received a 4 on this criterion, indicating that the standards in a majority of states are, overall, clear and specific—a very positive sign. Improvement in the crafting of standards is especially visible in revised documents and in supplementary grade level expectations and/or benchmarks. A total of 14 states received a 3. Some of these states are still using their original documents, wholly or in part, and a rating of 3 may be accounted for in some of these states by the poor quality of many of the original standards, especially at the high school level. Eight states (Connecticut, Hawaii, Michigan, New Mexico, Tennessee, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) earned a 1, mainly because they tend to contain many unteachable or uninterpretable standards.

Criterion D-2. They are measurable (i.e., they can lead to observable, comparable results across students and schools).

Rationale: Standards may be clear and specific but not measurable. For example, the expectation that students create an artistic interpretation of a literary work is written in clear language, but it is not measurable. No guidelines exist that point unambiguously to a definition of artistic interpretation. If standards are not susceptible to measurement or judgment by experienced raters, then they are not true standards. To be measurable, English language-arts standards ought to contain such verbs as "identify," "explain," "describe," "support," "present," "organize," "analyze," "evaluate," "use," "compare," "distinguish," "show," "interpret," or "apply." Such verbs result in the manipulation of some body of ideas or results that can be observed and judged. Standards with verbs such as "recognize that," "respect," "value," or even "understand" do not lead to the observable manipulation of ideas and are unlikely to be measurable. Standards that focus on the use of strategies or processes, rather than on their effects on intellectual content (or without any connection to what happens to the content), are also unlikely to be measurable. States should by now also be aware of the pitfalls in standards that expect students to draw on their personal experience. Can any teacher (never mind a test developer) assess the truthfulness of the introspection entailed by an objective expecting grade 12 students to "analyze the impact of the reader's experiences on their interpretations"?

Criterion D-2: They are measurable (i.e., they can lead to observable, comparable results across students and schools).

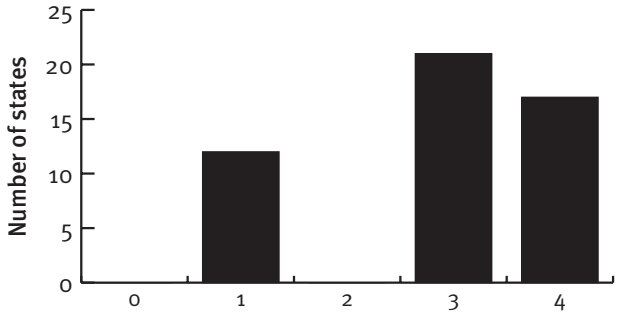


Results: Fewer states (23) earned a 4 on this criterion than on D-1. Overall, the expectations of these states are worded in ways that allow for measurement. Where they featured standards on strategies or processes, especially in reading and writing, they could still earn a top mark if they grouped them as such (usually to demonstrate that process as well as product is valued) and also provided many measurable academic expectations addressing all the important aspects of reading and writing growth. A total of 18 states earned a 3, usually because they featured unmeasurable standards in the key areas of reading and/or literature. Nine states earned a 1 (Arkansas, Connecticut, Hawaii, Michigan, Montana, New Mexico, Tennessee, Washington, and Wyoming); these states also typically had many unteachable standards.

Criterion D-3. They are of increasing intellectual difficulty at each higher educational level and cover all important aspects of learning in the area they address.

Rationale: Standards in English language arts should require the use of thinking processes that are appropriately challenging at each educational level, indicate important features to be demonstrated at each level, and show increasing intellectual or cognitive expectations. Sometimes an increase in difficulty can be achieved by a progression from such verbs as "describe," "use," or "identify" in the elementary grades to such verbs as "analyze," "explain," "interpret," "synthesize," "evaluate," and "apply" in the upper grades. Sometimes it can be achieved by mention of some of the details that reflect increasing difficulty—e.g., from knowledge of such literary elements as plot, character, and setting in the elementary grades to such sophisticated elements as foreshadowing, symbolism, and literary allusions in higher grades. For reading and literature standards, some well-known titles, authors, or literary periods should be addressed directly in the standards so that the expected level of difficulty is clear.

Criterion D-3: They are of increasing intellectual difficulty at each higher educational level and cover all important aspects of learning in the area they address.



Results: A total of 17 states earned a 4 on this criterion, 21 earned a 3, and 12 earned a 1. States that have recently crafted grade-level expectations through grade 8 to supplement their state standards tend to show increasing expectations, such as those in the Tri-State Grade Level Expectations for Reading and for Writing for New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. States with only one set of standards for grades 9 to 12 were less likely to earn a 4 on this criterion, unless that one set of standards was extremely strong. Ultimately, the high school reading and literature standards are the most informative standards for indicating the level of intellectual difficulty a state aims for, and without some content-rich and content-specific standards at the high school level, that level is not readily discernable.

Criterion D-4. They index or illustrate growth through the grades for reading by referring to specific reading levels or to titles of specific literary or academic works as examples of a reading level.

Rationale: Standards in the English language arts must make clear what growth in reading means over the grades. For example, a document may indicate the reading level in its standards by providing examples of well-known works for each reading standard, selective grade-level reading lists, or authors' names that are readily associated with specific texts whose approximate difficulty is known by most teachers. It may also offer sample passages showing the reading levels expected for specific educational levels.

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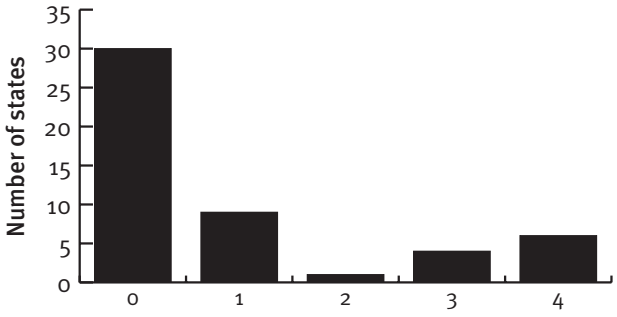
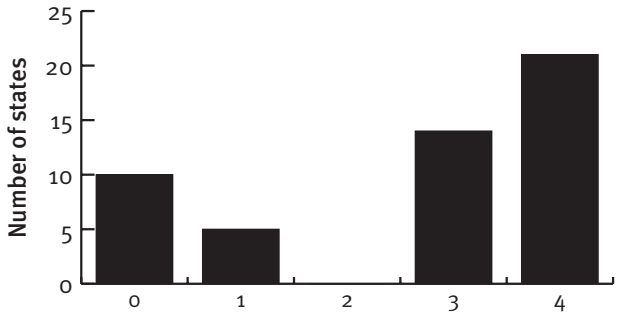


Results: Only six states earned a 4 on this criterion in 2005 (Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, and South Dakota). They provide examples of titles or authors, or required authors or titles, or suggested reading lists divided by educational level, or all of the above. Another four earned a 3 (California, Idaho, Louisiana, and New York) because they provide fewer examples, unselective or no reading lists, and/or no examples at some grade levels. Nine states earned a 1, usually because they provide a few titles somewhere to suggest high school expectations. But 30 states earned a 0, meaning that they provide no indices to reading growth at all. A few of these states assert that students should be reading "grade-level" texts or texts of "increasing complexity." Expectations need to be much more specific to guide teachers and promote equity.

Criterion D-5. They illustrate growth expected through the grades for writing with reference to examples and rating criteria, either in the standards document or in other documents.

Rationale: A state's writing criteria as applied to samples of student writing at the grade levels assessed are one clear indication of the quality of the writing expected. Without them, the expectations for growth in writing remain completely unclear.

Criterion D-5: They illustrate growth expected through the grades for writing with reference to examples and rating criteria, in the standards document or in other documents.

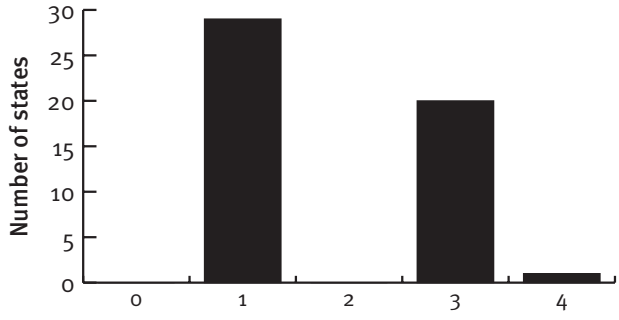


Results: A state earned a 4 either by providing in its standards document the criteria for its K-12 writing assessments and some exemplars showing the application of these criteria or by making these criteria and exemplars readily available elsewhere. That proved to be the case with only 21 states. In other words, fewer than half make this important information easily accessible to teachers, curriculum directors, test developers, and parents. Another 14 earned a 3 because their criteria or their exemplars do not go beyond grade 8. Fifteen states earned a 1 or a 0 because they do not seem to provide even that much information.

Criterion D-6. Their overall contents are sufficiently specific, comprehensive, and demanding to lead to a common core of high academic expectations for all students in the state.

Rationale: One purpose of state standards is to ensure that the academic demands of local school curricula are similar enough and demand enough at each grade level to assure all students in the state of equally high expectations. These demands must rest on some common subject matter if state assessments are to be meaningful. State standards must also be pegged to specific levels of reading difficulty and writing skill. They cannot ensure that all students bring comparable backgrounds in literary and academic knowledge to state assessments if they do not contain some specific expectations about the content students are to read (or otherwise be exposed to) over the grades. Local school districts may, of course, go far beyond statewide standards in fleshing out a complete curriculum for all their students.

Criterion D-6: Their overall contents are sufficiently specific, comprehensive, and demanding to lead to a common core of high academic expectations for all students in the state.



This is perhaps the most important criterion in the review because it expresses the basic goal of state standards. If they are not sufficiently specific and appropriately demanding in their expectations, as well as being teachable, so that the difficulty level of the content of the English and reading curriculum can guide grade-by-grade construction of classroom curricula, then they cannot lead to uniformly high expectations for all students. Instead, inequities will persist, and high school diplomas will continue to mean little. Unteachable standards may express idealistic goals but they are, by definition, doomed to failure.

Results: Only one state (Louisiana) earned a 4 on this criterion because it addresses the substantive as well as the formal content of the English curriculum at particular high school grades with content-specific as well as content-rich standards. Another 20 states earned a 3; they tend to have many well-written literature and reading standards, but these are not sufficiently content-specific and content-rich to outline the literary and non-literary content of the secondary English curriculum at any grade. They provide too much latitude to ensure a particular level of difficulty in a "classic" or "traditional" work. Without specification in standards themselves of a group of historically or culturally significant works or authors in specific literary periods, from which teachers are to draw part of their classroom curriculum, the content of the classroom curriculum at any one grade level may have no commonalities in substance or range of difficulty from classroom to classroom or year to year, and test developers may be able to avoid demanding selections on state assessments altogether.

The remaining states (29) earned a 1 on this criterion. They lack content-rich and content-specific standards that outline the secondary English curriculum and do not satisfactorily address even the formal content of the English curriculum. (For examples of standards that do this well, see Appendix D.)

Section E: Requirements or Expectations That Impede Learning (Negative Criteria)

Note: The scores a state received on the criteria in this section were subtracted from its total score. These criteria point to pedagogical practices, beliefs, or injunctions that prevent sound learning from taking place or diminish the value of what has been learned.

Criterion E-1. The reading/literature standards expect students to relate what they read to their life experiences.

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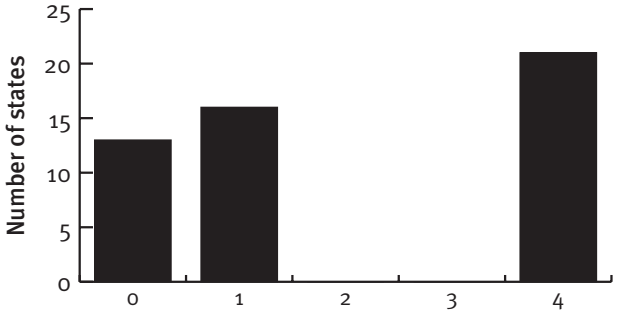


Rationale: Literary study today suffers from the frequent injunction to students to ground their interpretation of what they read in their personal experience or connect what they read to their own lives. Although many educators

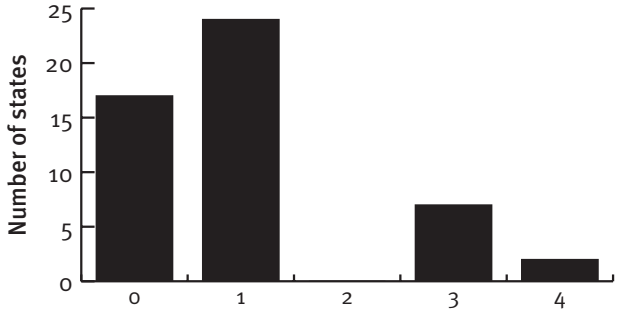
seemingly believe that students can understand a text better or be more motivated to read it if they relate it to their personal life, there is no research-based evidence to relate the putative benefits of this practice to academic achievement or increased leisure reading. In fact, the practice may narrow understanding of what is read by encouraging students to bring ready-made and often irrelevant associations to their reading, seriously interfering with an adequate interpretation of what they read. The practice also goes against the workings of the imagination and reduces the capacity of good literature to help students experience the writer's created world. Finally, the teacher's efforts to find works that can be easily related to students' personal lives may restrict the literature taught in the elementary grades to contemporary realistic fiction, and in high school to "young adult" literature or works that deal with contemporary social problems.

Results: States could receive a 0, 1, or 4 on this criterion, with 0 being the top score. Only 13 states received a 0. Sixteen states were marked down a point because this expectation is expressed only mildly or occasionally beyond the primary grades (where it can make sense). Another 21 express this expectation prominently or frequently, some with an extremely heavy-hand, and consequently were marked down 4 points. Many states promote use of personal experience in interpreting texts and use of literary study for addressing contemporary social issues through a variation of "connect the text to another text, to a situation in life, and/or to an event or issue in the world."

Criterion E-2. The reading/literature standards expect reading materials to address contemporary social issues.

Rationale: Although English teachers are often advised to select the works they ask their students to read for their relevance to social issues, it is inappropriate to make literary study a handmaiden to social studies. When the choice of literary work is guided by the hot-button issues of the day, the literary work selected may be studied more as a social documentary than as a literary work; by its very nature a literary work is not an accurate or reliable source of information about a social issue. The literary problem is that the aesthetic elements of the work may be given short shrift or ignored altogether. The curricular problem is that the effort to select literary works addressing social issues may eliminate from the curriculum literary works that do not address social issues. The use of such narrow selection criteria may also lower the level of what students are reading. Teachers who cannot find a suitably challenging literary work on the social issue they want to address may resort to works of lower quality (such as young-adult literature) in order to do so, especially if they want one with the "right" spin on it. Finally, there is no research-based evidence to relate this practice to higher levels of academic achievement or leisure reading.

Criterion E-2: The reading/literature standards expect reading materials to address contemporary social issues.



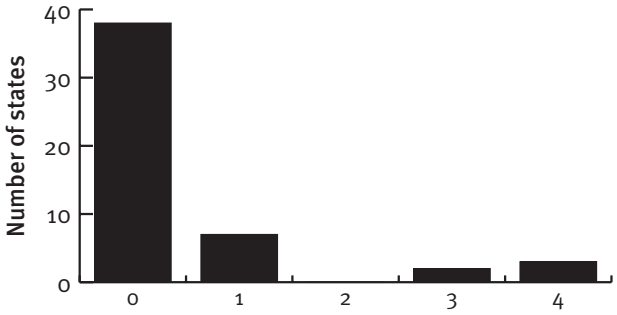
Results: A state could earn a 0 only if its standards indicate in some way that texts chosen for classroom study should be selected on the basis of their literary qualities or historical or cultural significance, whether or not these

texts can be related to a contemporary social issue. Seventeen states met this expectation. Twenty-four lost a point because they do not state any expectation that literary or non-literary readings should be selected on the basis of merit or cultural/historical significance even though these states do not suggest that they should be chosen to address current social issues. Nine states were marked down to a 1 or a 0 for expressing regular or strong expectations that students should relate what they read to current social issues, e.g., "connect the text to another text, to a situation in life, and/or to an event or issue in the world," "compare and contrast a variety of perspectives of self, others, and world issues through a selection of literary works," or "use literature to examine the social and political issues…."

Criterion E-3. The document implies that all texts, literary and non-literary, are susceptible to an infinite number of interpretations and that all points of view or interpretations are equally valid regardless of the logic, accuracy, and adequacy of supporting evidence.

Rationale: The idea that all knowledge is socially constructed and depends on one's "perspective," "point of view," or "discourse community" is very trendy in the academic world today. In its extreme form, any personal response to a text can be considered valid simply because it was made (even if it was based on a complete misunderstanding of the text). Although this relativistic notion is sometimes applied across the board to all kinds of texts, implying that the label on a medicine bottle may be as open in meaning as a poem, it tends to show up chiefly in literary study. The notion is based on the sensible observation that literary works may be especially susceptible to more than one valid interpretation, frequently because of authorial ambiguity. If the idea that different interpretations of a text are possible is introduced in a standards document, there should also be caveats that the validity of any literary interpretation depends on the quality and weight of the evidence cited and that different interpretations cannot be equally valid if the quality and weight of the evidence brought to bear on them differ. If the idea is connected to non-literary writing, such as "multiple perspectives" on historical events or political issues, then students should be expected to consider accuracy, completeness of information, and logical reasoning as qualifying conditions.

Criterion E-3: The document implies that all texts, literary and non-literary, are susceptible of an infinite number of interpretations and that all points of view or interpretations are equally valid.



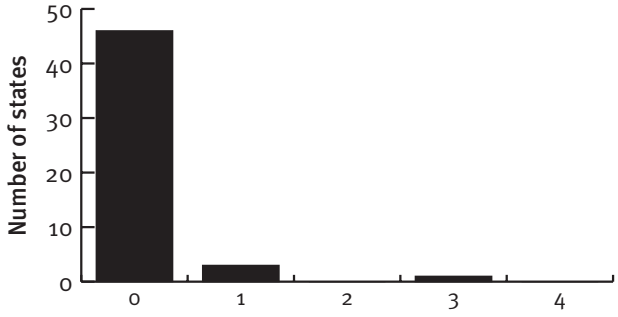
Results: Most states (38) earned a 4 on this criterion; they require, or seem to require, evidence to support an interpretation and do not seem to expect students to respect all interpretations of a text. Seven other states earned a 1; they seem to express this expectation but confine it to a narrow band of grades and/or did not make clear that they expect literary interpretations to be supported by evidence from the text. Five states (Connecticut, Delaware,

Michigan, Montana, and Utah) stress the validity of personal interpretations of a text without qualification (e.g., "accept, explore, challenge, and defend multiple interpretations of texts" and "respect the opinions of others about…written texts") and earned only 1 or 0 points depending on whether this moralistic injunction affected only the elementary or secondary level or all grade levels.

Criterion E-4. The examples of classroom activities or student writing offered with the standards or in documents designed to accompany them are politically slanted or reflect an attempt to manipulate students' feelings, thinking, or behavior.

Rationale: Examples of classroom activities, topics for writing, or social issues to address show exactly what learning is intended by a particular standard or what kind of activity may lead to that learning. They clarify the educational philosophy guiding the document and often suggest to teachers the kind of pedagogy its writers wish to promote. If a document features an unsound classroom activity or a piece of student writing with blatantly politicized content, it inadvertently (or deliberately) promotes the activity, the writing assignment, or the politicized content.

Criterion E-4: The examples of classroom activities or student writing offered with the standards or in documents designed to accompany them are politically slanted or reflect an attempt to manipulate students' feelings, thinking, or behavior.

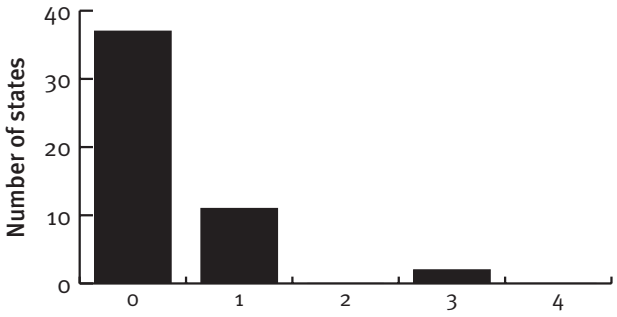


Results: Four states (Delaware, Georgia, New York, and Washington) were marked down on this criterion, with Washington marked down 3 points for politically loaded examples, e.g., in grades 9 and 10, "find text passages that support an inference that the author advocates economic change" and "examine how an action leads to long-lasting effects, e.g., environmental, economic, and/or political impact of off-shore drilling or strip mining."

Criterion E-5. The standards teach moral or social dogma.

Rationale: Standards are not supposed to be sociological generalizations or conclusions for students to internalize and regurgitate. The inherent problem with standards that are little more than moral dogmas is that they are unassessable: How can we really know from an assessment what a student's moral values are and how sincerely they are held? The intellectual problem with standards that express sociological generalizations is that most such generalizations are reductive assertions about complex phenomena and have many exceptions. In addition, they are the fruits of independent study and critical thinking and require evidence for support. To ask students to learn them as facts is to bypass the entire intellectual process on which they should be based.

Criterion E-5: The standards teach moral or social dogma.

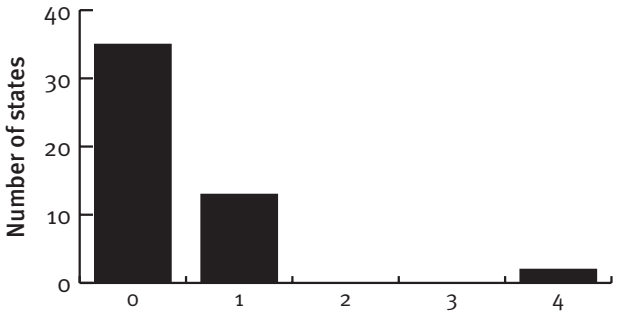


Results: Moral or social dogma seeps into the standards of 11 states—e.g., "people respond differently to texts based on their background knowledge, purpose, and point of view," or "language and literature are primary means by which culture is transmitted," or "demonstrate an understanding that a single text will elicit a wide variety of responses, each of which may be the point of view of the individual reader or listener." These 11 states were marked down 1 point. Two others were marked down 3 points for promoting cultural stereotypes, e.g., "understand an author's opinions and how they address culture, ethnicity, gender, and historical periods." The diversity strand in Hawaii implies that issues of "race, class, and gender" in analyzing "underlying assumptions and values represented in text" may trump accuracy or adequacy of the evidence.

Criterion E-6. The document explicitly or implicitly recommends specific pedagogical strategies or one philosophy for all teachers to follow.

Rationale: No one instructional approach can work with all students all the time. A standards document should allow well-trained teachers to use their professional judgment and their understanding of educational research in addressing pedagogical issues. A document that attempts to mandate only one approach and exclude others has gone beyond its mandate and undermines good teaching. For example, not all students need systematic phonics instruction. But we do know from research that most students benefit from it, especially less able readers, and teachers should not be prevented from providing it for them.

Criterion E-6: The document explicitly or implicitly recommends specific pedagogical strategies or one philosophy for all teachers to follow.



Results: Although most states do not recommend specific pedagogical approaches in their standards document, 15 were marked down 1 or more points for doing so. Most of these 15 states received a 1 because they actively promote

a holistic or "integrated" approach to beginning reading, in effect discouraging teachers from having students practice skills. The others were marked down more because their literature standards are completely dominated by a "reader response" approach or because their advocacy of process and skills led them to deny the very existence of substantive content in the English curriculum.

Appendix C:
Unteachable Literature Standards

How Unteachable Literature Standards Get Into State Documents

How do unteachable statements get into state documents under the heading of "literature standards"? To some extent, these pretentious but content-deficient standards may be traced to the influence of the model offered by the principal professional organization representing teachers of English: the National Council of Teachers of English. Despite the view of the director of the National Research Center on Literature Teaching and Learning that literature is a discipline with its own content, like mathematics and science,[8] NCTE/IRA's standards imply that there is no particular substantive content in the English curriculum. Utah, for example, unequivocally asserts in its standards document that language arts teachers are "teachers of process more than dispensers of content" and insists that the "language arts themselves have very little content." Given their form, the most likely explanation is that the unteachable standards cluttering the documents of a majority of the states were written or influenced by teacher educators and literary theorists in our institutions of higher education. In those states, well-trained and experienced high school English teachers may not have been called upon to craft the kind of standards they use in their own classes because they were dismissed as "traditional."

Four Types of Unteachable Literature Standards and Their Origins

The unteachable literature standards in the state documents reviewed this year reflect the influence of at least four contemporary academic theories on the reading or teaching of literature. These theories have influenced prospective English teachers in both their English and education coursework and warrant close examination because of their possible cumulative effects. There is no body of evidence that they have positively influenced students' reading skills and reading habits, transforming them into "lifelong learners" who read for pleasure. There is, instead, evidence to the contrary in a June 2004 report by the National Endowment for the Arts—evidence of a massive and accelerating decline in adult literary reading in this country, with the steepest decline over the past 20 years in the youngest age groups (18 to 24).[9]

1. The New Historicism: A Reductionist Approach to Literary Study [10]

This approach shows up in standards that are pre-occupied with the author and context of a text, not the text itself, as in Nebraska's "analyze how a literary work reflects the author's personal history, attitudes, and/or beliefs," Tennessee's "recognize the influence of an author's background, gender, environment, audience, and experience on a literary work," Nevada's "make inferences…about an author's cultural and historical perspectives," or Ohio's "analyze the characteristics of various literary periods and how the issues influenced the writers of those periods." It is not clear how a teacher teaches to such standards. What does a teacher do to help 10th graders understand aspects of *Julius Caesar* that could be said to reflect Shakespeare's personal history or beliefs? What might pre-college students read to learn what Shakespeare's personal history and attitudes were before trying to figure out how they can be detected in the play?

By virtue of its obsession with the author and context of a work, the new historicism promotes a wary attitude toward reading. Students are encouraged to view a literary work as little more than an expression of the author's prejudices, as in New Mexico's "recognize the point of view of the author by considering alternative points of view or reasons [for] remaining fair-minded and open to other interpretations," Washington's "integrate information

from difference sources to form conclusions about author's assumptions, biases, credibility, cultural and social perspectives, or world views," Nevada's "analyze viewpoints and messages in relation to the historical and cultural context of recognized works of British, American, or world literature," or New Jersey's "recognize historical and cultural biases and different points of view." Strangely, although this approach insists that an interpretation of a literary text must be informed by its "historical and cultural contexts," no state offers a companion standard suggesting that students read contemporary primary sources or the author's autobiography in order to explore a work's historical and cultural context or the inspiration for it.

The new historicism also encourages blanket stereotypes of authors, historical periods, and whole bodies of literature, ranging from New Jersey's "understand an author's opinions and how they address culture, ethnicity, gender, and historical periods" to Virginia's "compare and contrast the subject matter, theme…of works of classic poets with those of contemporary poets." Such standards do not suggest a deeper appreciation of the literary work as their purpose. Rather, they imply that dead authors must be sociologically pigeonholed and their works viewed as morally defective products of an earlier time rather than as acts of the moral imagination. One wonders whether the intent of this approach is to eliminate pleasure in any work portrayed as a classic and whether students immersed in such an approach end up enjoying literature at all.

Standards embodying this approach may be unmeasurable as well as unteachable because they require an enormous amount of prior knowledge on the part of the student and are thus not susceptible to fair assessment on state or district tests. Most students below grade 11 are incapable of doing the kind of reading required to turn literary study into an inquisition of the author or a moral putdown of his or her times. This level of analysis certainly does not exist in grade 3, where Connecticut expects third graders to "develop a critical stance to texts."

2. Universalism: An Egalitarian Approach to Literary Study

In contrast to the pitch of reductionist standards, other standards attempt to rewrite history by suggesting that all literary works and characters in all cultures and all eras reflect universal themes. This egalitarian approach is a literary mutation of the "cultural equivalence" approach to history. Sometimes it seems to hint at restricting literary study to texts with so-called universal themes or characters, as in Ohio's "interpret universal themes across different works by the same author or by different authors" or Virginia's "discuss American literature as it reflects…universal characters…." Apparently, it doesn't matter what author or work or body of literature is studied; they are all of equal intellectual value and literary merit.

This approach runs into trouble when, in an attempt to suggest what these so-called universal themes are, a state self-contradictorily lists culture-specific topics. Worse yet, it lists topics that are often inapplicable if not misleading (or not themes at all). For example, in a list of otherwise appropriate topics, Georgia claims that "cultural diversity and tolerance" are "universal themes characteristic of American literature across time and genre," that "cultural values, cultural tradition, and philosophical roots" are "universal themes characteristic of world literature across time and genre," and that "classism" and "imperialism" are "universal themes characteristic of British and Commonwealth literature across time and genre." In a curriculum framework, Virginia correctly identifies a list of major topics in American literature that includes the American Dream, loss of innocence, relationship to science, and rebellion and protest, but not cultural diversity or tolerance.

It is not clear how a "universal theme" can be characteristic of only some cultures, but logic and evidence are not the strong point of egalitarians. Unaware that egalitarian universalism and a reductionist approach are mutually contradictory, some states want teachers and students to believe that historical and cultural contexts lead to specific themes, characters, and perspectives despite "universal themes" and characters across all cultures, eras, and works that "connect all people."

3. Associationism: A Post-Modern Behavioral Approach to Literary Study

Many standards reflect the doctrine long propounded by many educators that students must connect the literature they read to the "world" and to their own lives to make literary reading meaningful, memorable, and useful. This doctrine seems to be based on the assumption that students don't want to read literature and that relating it to current affairs or their own lives will motivate them to read it and help them understand it. Such standards as "connect literature to historical contexts, current events, and his/her own experiences," "connect the text to another text, to a situation in life, and/or to an event or issue in the world," and "make text connections to self, to other text and to the real world" are a few of the variations on this theme that can be found at all grade levels in some states. The injunction, however, is not an academic standard and is unsound as well as unmeasurable. Given the inadequate knowledge most students have of history and current events, such connections are likely to be forced, fantasied, deeply flawed, or totally fallacious.

"Making connections" often blends into an expectation to use literature to understand history, even though use of any artistic creation to understand historical issues is fraught with peril. Artists have always used their imagination in expressing themselves, a phenomenon known as poetic license. Nevertheless, Connecticut wants students to "use literature to examine the social and political issues …" and Washington wants students to "use literary themes within and across texts to interpret current issues, events, and/or how they relate to self," while Delaware wants students to "apply knowledge gained from literature … as a resource for understanding social and political issues." No caveats ever accompany these standards suggesting that students also explain the limitations in using literary works to understand historical or contemporary issues.

Straining for relevance, standards frequently emphasize connections to the students' own lives, as in North Dakota's "Apply universal themes to real life situations" or Idaho's "relate social, cultural, and historical aspects of literature to the reader's personal experience." Delaware is insistent about the personal connection through the grades, expecting students from grades 8 through 12 to "relate themes of literary text and media to personal experiences" and "to relate the text's content to real-life situations." In a few documents, associationism lapses into bibliotherapy—using literature to guide one's life. Much depends on what students read, of course, but one worries if they read *Romeo and Juliet* what they might do with a standard such as Michigan's "use themes and central ideas in literature and other texts to generate solutions to problems and formulate perspectives on issues in their own lives."

That the practical effect of associationism is to narrow, not broaden, the literary experience is clear in many of Washington's standards. It expects students to read (or perhaps be restricted to reading) only "culturally relevant" texts, as in, "Connect current issues, previous information, and experiences to characters, events, and information within and across culturally relevant texts." Washington's glossary defines the phrase as "reading materials to which the student can identify or relate." However, good teachers of English have never confined students to "culturally relevant" texts. Nor do they use the kind of "hooks" suggested by the doctrine of associationism to motivate their students to read works of literary merit.[11]

Sometimes students are expected to make specific connections between the literary works they read and other subjects they study, as in Virginia's "understand the connections between literature and other disciplines" and New Jersey's "understand perspectives of authors in a variety of interdisciplinary works." Both are uninterpretable. What the hapless English teacher is to do with such standards, I can't imagine. When a standard expects students to relate a literary work to "artifacts, artistic creations, or historical sites of the period of its setting" (as in a Massachusetts standard), the object of the connection is clear. Educators have imposed the doctrine of "making connections" to the "real world" on the pedagogy for mathematics, science, and history as well, without any research-based evidence showing an increase in student achievement.

4. Reader Response: Constructivism Run Amuck

Standards encouraging students to interpret literary works through the lens of their personal experience and to use personal criteria to evaluate them reflect a constructivist approach.[12] Such standards also privilege subjective knowledge. Consider Montana's "respond to literary works on the basis of personal insights and respect the different responses of others," Michigan's "connect personal knowledge, experience, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives…," Connecticut's "cite textual and personal evidence to support a critical stance," and Oklahoma's "support inferences with text evidence and personal experience." Delaware is emphatic about the authority of subjective knowledge, as in, "understand that a single text will elicit a wide variety of responses, each of which is valid from a personal, subjective perspective." Yet no constructivist-tinged standard is susceptible to objective evaluation.

These four trendy approaches to literary study are sometimes combined, with odd and undesirable effects. When a reductionist approach is commingled with a constructivist approach, for example, it creates standards that turn the privileging of subjective experience on its head. Arkansas wants students to "connect own background knowledge to recognize and analyze personal biases brought to a text" in grade 11, and to "connect own background knowledge to recognize and analyze personal biases brought to a text with an emphasis on gender and national origin" in grade 12. Oklahoma has a similar standard: "Investigate influences on a reader's response to a text (e.g., personal experience and values; perspective shaped by age, gender, class, or nationality)." It seems that students must detect and factor into an interpretation of a literary work not only the author's prejudices but also their own. It is not clear what kind of literary understanding, if any, would emerge from this tortured mandate.

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[8] *In Envisioning Literature: Literary Understanding and Literature Instruction* (NY: Teachers College Press, 1995), Judith Langer writes: "[L]iterature is a discipline like mathematics and science. It has a content to be learned but also a way of reasoning underlying it" (p. 158).

[9] National Endowment for the Arts, *Reading at Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*, June 2004. http://www.nea.gov/pub/ReadingAtRisk.pdf

[10] For these terms, I am indebted to Paul Cantor in "Average Bill," a review of Shakespeare, by Michael Wood, in the *Claremont Review of Books*, Volume IV, Number 3, Summer 2004.

[11] See, for example, Carol Jago, *Classics in the Classroom: Designing Accessible Literature Lessons*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004, and Carol Jago, *With Rigor for All: Teaching the Classics to Contemporary Students*, Portland, ME: Calendar Island Publishers, 2000.

[12] For suggestions on ways in which a state's board of higher education or regents can assist a state board of education for K-12 in strengthening literature-deprived high school English programs, see "The state of literary study in national and state English language arts standards: Why it matters and what can be done about it." In S. Stotsky (Ed.), *What's at stake in the K-12 standards wars: A primer for educational policy makers* (pp. 237-258). NY: Peter Lang Publishers, 2000.

Appendix D:
Strong Literature Standards

As the examples below demonstrate, it is clearly possible for all states to craft teachable content-rich and content-specific literature standards that address important cultural and literary goals, regardless of the constraints exerted by the tradition of local control. Not one of the states from which these examples were drawn limits English teachers to an old-fashioned curriculum or to specific works. Choices are provided within broad categories that fit (or can be fit) into a coherent curriculum sequence.

Content-Rich Literature Standards

A number of states show what content-rich standards look like, even though some may also provide unteachable standards as well. For example, by the end of grade 8, Nebraska expects students to study "stories and biographies of historical figures important in the United States and Nebraska," and by the end of grade 12, the "works of Nebraska authors." West Virginia expects students to study "West Virginia authors."

A number of other states have crafted broader content-rich standards at the high school level. Through three separate standards, Minnesota expects students to "read…traditional, classical, and contemporary works of literary merit" from American literature, British literature, and civilizations and countries around the world. Although this type of standard provides no specific guidance within two large bodies of literature, its virtues are that it expects study of both American and British literature, and it stresses works of literary merit, which most states fail to mention. New Hampshire offers a similarly broad standard but also specifies several indices of merit; it expects students to "demonstrate competence in…classical and contemporary American and British literature as well as literary works translated into English," mentioning use of Newbery award-winning books at the intermediate grades and Pulitzer and Nobel prize-winners at the secondary level as ways to guarantee literary or intellectual merit.

Arizona's objectives come even closer to outlining a literature curriculum for the last two years of high school. They are clear, strong, and well-written, emphasizing study of the literary text (not its author or context), as well as chronological coverage of important American and British works. In grade 10, students are to "compare and contrast classic works of literature that deal with similar topics and problems (e.g., individual and society, meaning of friendship, freedom, responsibility)." In grade 11, students are to "analyze culturally or historically significant literary works of American literature that reflect our major literary periods and traditions" and "describe the historical and cultural aspects found in cross-cultural works of literature." In grade 12, students are to "analyze culturally or historically significant literary works of British and world literature that reflect the major literary periods and traditions" and "relate literary works and their authors to the seminal ideas of their eras." (The latter standard turns the dismissive intentions of the new historicists inside out; students are to learn how literary works reflect the cutting edges, not the prejudices, of their times.)

Standards in a few states go further in including cultural details. Students in the District of Columbia are to "explicate British and world poetry and prose" and "identify characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon [and] Medieval periods, the English Renaissance, the Seventeenth Century and the Victorian Age." As part of a standard on myth, traditional narrative, and classical literature, Massachusetts expects students in grades 3 and 4 to "acquire knowledge of culturally significant characters and events in Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology and other traditional liter-

ature," and students in grades 9 and 10 to "analyze the characters, structure, and themes of classical Greek drama and epic poetry."

In a section titled "Essential Knowledge, Skills, and Processes," Virginia elaborates on the specific literary periods, major themes, character types, and other aspects of literary study it wants teachers to teach in order to address broad content-rich standards that require study of American and British literary texts from major literary periods. California includes some of these details in its content-rich standards: Students in grades 11 and 12 "analyze recognized works of American literature presenting a variety of genres and traditions: (a) trace the development of American literature from the colonial period forward, (b) contrast the major periods, themes, styles, and trends and describe how works by members of different cultures relate to one another in each period, and (c) evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings." They also "analyze recognized works of world literature from a variety of authors: (a) contrast the major literary forms, techniques, and characteristics of the major literary periods (e.g., Homeric Greece, medieval, romantic, neoclassic, modern), (b) relate literary works and authors to the major themes and issues of their eras, and (c) evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings."

Alabama provides cogent examples and points of departure for comparable content-rich standards on American literature. In grade 10, students learn "major historical developments in language and literature in America from the beginnings to 1900 (e.g., simplicity of early American literature, religious nature and themes in much early American literature, relationships to historical events and to British literature)." In grade 11, students continue study of post-1900 American literature.

Georgia's literature standards illustrate a useful way to clarify the substance of content-rich standards; it pairs each set of grade level standards with a selective list of sample titles. Thus, in standards for Reading and American Literature, students "analyze the influence of mythic, traditional, or classical literature on American literature" and [in order to deepen understanding of a literary work] relate it to "primary source documents of its literary period or historical setting," "seminal ideas of the time in which it is set or the time of its composition," and "characteristics of the literary time period that it represents: Romanticism/Transcendentalism, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism (including Harlem Renaissance), and Postmodernism." Introductory material to one standard indicates that the texts to be used should be of the "quality and complexity illustrated by the American Literature reading list."

Content-Specific Literature Standards

The most content-specific objectives are in Louisiana's 2004 grade-level expectations. For example, grade 9 students "identify and explain connections between historical contexts and works of various authors, including Homer, Sophocles, and Shakespeare" and "analyze…distinctive elements (including theme, structure, characterization) of a variety of literary forms and types, including: essays by early and modern writers; epic poetry such as *The Odyssey*; forms of lyric and narrative poetry such as ballads and sonnets; drama, including ancient, Renaissance, and modern; short stories and novels; and biographies and autobiographies." Grade 10 students "analyze…distinctive elements, including theme and structure, of literary forms and types, including: essays by early and modern writers; lyric, narrative, and dramatic poetry; drama, including ancient, Renaissance, and modern; short stories, novellas, and novels; biographies and autobiographies; speeches." They also "analyze connections between historical contexts and the works of authors, including Sophocles and Shakespeare." Students in grades 11 and 12 "demonstrate understanding of…American, British, and world literature using a variety of strategies, for example: …comparing and contrasting major periods, themes, styles, and trends within and across texts," and "analyze and explain the significance of literary forms, techniques, characteristics, and recurrent themes of major literary periods in ancient, American, British, or world literature."

Content-rich standards appear in other areas of a standards document as well. California students in grades 9 and 10 are to "identify Greek, Roman, and Norse mythology and use the knowledge to understand the origin and meaning of new words." A number of other states have also crafted content-specific vocabulary standards for the secondary grades.

Appendix E: Tables

This appendix contains all data tables created for this review, including those that appear in the body of the report

2005 Final Grades

by state rank

State	GPA	Grade	Rank
Massachusetts	3.91	A	1
California	3.68	A	2
Alabama	3.64	A	3
Louisiana	3.59	A	4
Indiana	3.50	A	5
South Dakota	3.36	B	6
Georgia	3.27	B	7
Virginia	3.23	B	8
Minnesota	3.14	B	9
Texas	3.14	B	9
Illinois	3.09	B	11
North Carolina	3.05	B	12
Arizona	2.91	B	13
New Hampshire	2.91	B	13
South Carolina	2.91	B	13
Idaho	2.82	B	16
Mississippi	2.82	B	16
New York	2.82	B	16
Nevada	2.77	B	19
Oregon	2.77	B	19
North Dakota	2.68	C	21
Pennsylvania	2.68	C	21
West Virginia	2.68	C	21
Oklahoma	2.64	C	24
Ohio	2.55	C	25
Maryland	2.45	C	26
Maine	2.45	C	26
National Average: 2.41			
Vermont	2.41	C	28
Missouri	2.36	C	29
Arkansas	2.32	C	30
Washington, DC	2.32	C	30
Nebraska	2.27	C	32
Rhode Island	2.09	C	33
Delaware	2.05	C	34
Florida	2.05	C	34
Wisconsin	2.00	C	36
New Jersey	1.95	C	37
Hawaii	1.91	C	38
Kansas	1.91	C	38
Colorado	1.82	C	40
Kentucky	1.77	C	41
Utah	1.73	C	42
Alaska	1.68	D	43
New Mexico	1.59	D	44
Tennessee	1.45	D	45
Michigan	1.41	D	46
Wyoming	1.27	F	47
Washington	1.23	F	48
Connecticut	1.09	F	49
Montana	0.82	F	50
Iowa	*	*	*

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

2005 Final Grades

alphabetically by state

State	GPA	Grade	Rank
Alabama	3.64	A	3
Alaska	1.68	D	43
Arizona	2.91	B	13
Arkansas	2.32	C	30
California	3.68	A	2
Colorado	1.82	C	40
Connecticut	1.09	F	49
Delaware	2.05	C	34
Florida	2.05	C	34
Georgia	3.27	B	7
Hawaii	1.91	C	38
Idaho	2.82	B	16
Illinois	3.09	B	11
Indiana	3.5	A	5
Iowa	*	*	*
Kansas	1.91	C	38
Kentucky	1.77	C	41
Louisiana	3.59	A	4
Maine	2.45	C	26
Maryland	2.45	C	26
Massachusetts	3.91	A	1
Michigan	1.41	D	46
Minnesota	3.14	B	9
Mississippi	2.82	B	16
Missouri	2.36	C	29
Montana	0.82	F	50
Nebraska	2.27	C	32
Nevada	2.77	B	19
New Hampshire	2.91	B	13
New Jersey	1.95	C	37
New Mexico	1.59	D	44
New York	2.82	B	16
North Carolina	3.05	B	12
North Dakota	2.68	C	21
Ohio	2.55	C	25
Oklahoma	2.64	C	24
Oregon	2.77	B	19
Pennsylvania	2.68	C	21
Rhode Island	2.09	C	33
South Carolina	2.91	B	13
South Dakota	3.36	B	6
Tennessee	1.45	D	45
Texas	3.14	B	9
Utah	1.73	C	42
Vermont	2.41	C	28
Virginia	3.23	B	8
Washington	1.23	F	48
Washington, DC	2.32	C	30
West Virginia	2.68	C	21
Wisconsin	2	C	36
Wyoming	1.27	F	47
National Average			2.41

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

2005 and 2000 Grades

alphabetically by state

	2005 Grade	2000 Grade	2005 GPA	2000 GPA	Change
Alabama	A	B	3.64	3.37	0.27
Alaska	D	D	1.68	1.63	0.05
Arizona	B	B	2.91	2.85	0.06
Arkansas	C	C	2.32	1.89	0.43
California	A	B	3.68	3.48	0.20
Colorado	C	D	1.82	1.63	0.19
Connecticut	F	C	1.09	2.07	-0.98
Delaware	C	C	2.05	2.44	-0.39
Florida	C	B	2.05	2.74	-0.69
Georgia	B	B	3.27	2.89	0.38
Hawaii	C	D	1.91	1.33	0.58
Idaho	B	*	2.82	*	N/A
Illinois	B	B	3.09	3.04	0.05
Indiana	A	D	3.50	1.59	1.91
Iowa	*	*	*	*	N/A
Kansas	C	D	1.91	1.44	0.47
Kentucky	C	D	1.77	1.63	0.14
Louisiana	A	B	3.59	2.96	0.63
Maine	C	B	2.45	2.81	-0.36
Maryland	C	B	2.45	3.11	-0.66
Massachusetts	A	B	3.91	3.48	0.43
Michigan	D	F	1.41	1.00	0.41
Minnesota	B	D	3.14	1.67	1.47
Mississippi	B	C	2.82	2.41	0.41
Missouri	C	D	2.36	1.48	0.88
Montana	F	F	0.82	1.04	-0.22
Nebraska	C	B	2.27	3.19	-0.92
Nevada	B	B	2.77	2.96	-0.19
New Hampshire	B	C	2.91	2.07	0.84
New Jersey	C	D	1.95	1.52	0.43
New Mexico	D	C	1.59	2.15	-0.56
New York	B	C	2.82	2.59	0.23
North Carolina	B	B	3.05	2.74	0.31
North Dakota	C	F	2.68	1.30	1.38
Ohio	C	C	2.55	1.78	0.77
Oklahoma	C	C	2.64	2.07	0.57
Oregon	B	D	2.77	1.70	1.07
Pennsylvania	C	C	2.68	2.63	0.05
Rhode Island	C	F	2.09	0.56	1.53
South Carolina	B	B	2.91	2.89	0.02
South Dakota	B	C	3.36	2.59	0.77
Tennessee	D	D	1.45	1.41	0.04
Texas	B	B	3.14	2.74	0.40
Utah	C	C	1.73	2.26	-0.53
Vermont	C	C	2.41	1.78	0.63
Virginia	B	B	3.23	2.96	0.27
Washington	F	C	1.23	1.85	-0.62
Washington, DC	C	B	2.32	3.33	-1.01
West Virginia	C	B	2.68	2.89	-0.21
Wisconsin	C	B	2.00	3.19	-1.19
Wyoming	F	C	1.27	2.07	-0.80

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

Section A: Purposes and Expectations for the Standards

	A-1	A-2	A-3	A-4	A-5	A-6	Total	Average	Grade
Alabama	4	3	4	3	4	2	20	3.33	B
Alaska	4	1	3	3	0	2	13	2.17	C
Arizona	4	1	4	0	4	2	15	2.50	C
Arkansas	4	0	3	1	0	1	9	1.50	D
California	4	4	4	4	4	1	21	3.50	A
Colorado	4	4	1	0	3	1	13	2.17	C
Connecticut	1	0	3	0	0	1	5	0.83	F
Delaware	4	0	3	0	0	1	8	1.33	D
Florida	4	0	3	1	0	1	9	1.50	D
Georgia	3	0	3	4	4	1	15	2.50	C
Hawaii	4	3	3	1	0	1	12	2.00	C
Idaho	4	3	4	0	1	3	15	2.50	C
Illinois	4	3	4	0	1	3	15	2.50	C
Indiana	4	4	4	3	4	1	20	3.33	B
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	3	0	4	1	0	0	8	1.33	D
Kentucky	3	0	1	0	0	1	5	0.83	F
Louisiana	4	4	4	1	4	4	21	3.50	A
Maine	4	4	1	1	1	3	14	2.33	C
Maryland	4	0	4	3	0	2	13	2.17	C
Massachusetts	4	4	4	3	4	4	23	3.83	A
Michigan	1	1	4	1	0	0	7	1.17	F
Minnesota	4	0	4	1	3	2	14	2.33	C
Mississippi	3	0	3	1	4	2	13	2.17	C
Missouri	4	4	4	0	0	1	13	2.17	C
Montana	4	3	1	0	0	2	10	1.67	D
Nebraska	4	4	4	0	0	1	13	2.17	C
Nevada	4	0	4	0	1	1	10	1.67	D
New Hampshire	4	4	3	1	4	2	18	3.00	B
New Jersey	3	1	4	1	0	1	10	1.67	D
New Mexico	4	4	4	1	0	1	14	2.33	C
New York	4	0	4	3	0	3	14	2.33	C
North Carolina	4	4	4	1	3	4	20	3.33	B
North Dakota	4	0	4	0	0	2	10	1.67	D
Ohio	4	0	3	1	1	3	12	2.00	C
Oklahoma	4	0	3	1	0	3	11	1.83	C
Oregon	4	0	4	1	0	1	10	1.67	D
Pennsylvania	4	0	1	1	0	3	9	1.50	D
Rhode Island	3	3	3	0	0	2	11	1.83	C
South Carolina	4	0	4	1	3	1	13	2.17	C
South Dakota	4	3	4	3	4	1	19	3.17	B
Tennessee	1	1	4	1	0	1	8	1.33	D
Texas	4	4	4	1	3	3	19	3.17	B
Utah	3	0	4	3	0	1	11	1.83	C
Vermont	4	3	3	3	1	2	16	2.67	C
Virginia	4	4	4	1	3	4	20	3.33	B
Washington	0	0	4	0	0	3	7	1.17	F
Washington, DC	4	3	1	3	3	0	14	2.33	C
West Virginia	3	0	4	3	1	4	15	2.50	C
Wisconsin	1	0	1	0	0	3	5	0.83	F
Wyoming	0	0	1	0	1	3	5	0.83	F
National Average								2.15	

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

Section B: Organization of Standards

	B-1	B-2	B-3	Total	Average	Grade
Alabama	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Alaska	4	1	3	8	2.67	C
Arizona	3	4	4	11	3.67	A
Arkansas	4	3	1	8	2.67	C
California	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Colorado	4	3	0	7	2.33	C
Connecticut	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
Delaware	4	3	4	11	3.67	A
Florida	3	3	1	7	2.33	C
Georgia	4	3	4	11	3.67	A
Hawaii	3	3	4	10	3.33	B
Idaho	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Illinois	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Indiana	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	3	4	4	11	3.67	A
Kentucky	4	4	3	11	3.67	A
Louisiana	4	3	4	11	3.67	A
Maine	2	3	0	5	1.67	D
Maryland	3	4	4	11	3.67	A
Massachusetts	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Michigan	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
Minnesota	3	4	4	11	3.67	A
Mississippi	4	3	3	10	3.33	B
Missouri	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
Montana	2	3	1	6	2.00	C
Nebraska	2	4	4	10	3.33	B
Nevada	3	4	4	11	3.67	A
New Hampshire	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
New Jersey	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
New Mexico	4	0	1	5	1.67	D
New York	3	1	4	8	2.67	C
North Carolina	4	1	3	8	2.67	C
North Dakota	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Ohio	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Oklahoma	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Oregon	3	4	4	11	3.67	A
Pennsylvania	3	4	4	11	3.67	A
Rhode Island	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
South Carolina	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
South Dakota	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Tennessee	4	1	1	6	2.00	C
Texas	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Utah	4	1	4	9	3.00	B
Vermont	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
Virginia	4	4	4	12	4.00	A
Washington	3	1	3	7	2.33	C
Washington, DC	4	3	1	8	2.67	C
West Virginia	4	3	0	7	2.33	C
Wisconsin	3	3	3	9	3.00	B
Wyoming	3	1	1	5	1.67	D
National Average					3.22	

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

Section C: Disciplinary Coverage of the Standards

	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	C-5	C-6	C-7	Total	Average	Grades
Alabama	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	26	3.71	A
Alaska	0	3	1	3	3	1	1	12	1.71	C
Arizona	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	24	3.43	B
Arkansas	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	22	3.14	B
California	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	27	3.86	A
Colorado	1	1	1	3	4	1	4	15	2.14	C
Connecticut	3	1	1	3	4	3	3	18	2.57	C
Delaware	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	24	3.43	B
Florida	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	23	3.29	B
Georgia	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	26	3.71	A
Hawaii	3	1	3	4	4	1	1	17	2.43	C
Idaho	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	24	3.43	B
Illinois	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	24	3.43	B
Indiana	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	26	3.71	A
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	0	4	1	3	3	1	4	16	2.29	C
Kentucky	0	4	1	4	3	0	0	12	1.71	C
Louisiana	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	26	3.71	A
Maine	3	1	3	4	4	4	4	23	3.29	B
Maryland	4	4	3	4	4	1	3	23	3.29	B
Massachusetts	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	28	4.00	A
Michigan	3	3	1	3	4	3	1	18	2.57	C
Minnesota	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	24	3.43	B
Mississippi	4	4	3	3	4	3	3	24	3.43	B
Missouri	4	3	1	4	4	1	4	21	3.00	B
Montana	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	7	1.00	F
Nebraska	3	3	3	1	3	1	4	18	2.57	C
Nevada	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	24	3.43	B
New Hampshire	3	3	3	3	4	1	3	20	2.86	B
New Jersey	3	3	1	4	4	1	3	19	2.71	B
New Mexico	4	3	1	4	4	1	4	21	3.00	B
New York	4	3	3	4	3	1	4	22	3.14	B
North Carolina	1	3	3	4	4	3	4	22	3.14	B
North Dakota	4	4	3	4	4	3	4	26	3.71	A
Ohio	3	4	1	4	4	4	4	24	3.43	B
Oklahoma	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	24	3.43	B
Oregon	3	4	3	4	4	1	4	23	3.29	B
Pennsylvania	4	4	1	4	3	4	4	24	3.43	B
Rhode Island	1	3	1	3	3	1	4	16	2.29	C
South Carolina	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	25	3.57	A
South Dakota	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	22	3.14	B
Tennessee	1	1	1	3	4	3	3	16	2.29	C
Texas	4	4	3	4	4	1	4	24	3.43	B
Utah	4	2	1	3	4	1	3	18	2.57	C
Vermont	1	3	3	3	3	3	4	20	2.86	B
Virginia	4	3	3	4	4	1	4	23	3.29	B
Washington	4	3	1	4	4	1	4	21	3.00	B
Washington, DC	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	22	3.14	B
West Virginia	3	3	3	4	4	1	4	22	3.14	B
Wisconsin	3	3	1	4	4	3	4	22	3.14	B
Wyoming	3	3	1	3	4	1	4	19	2.71	B
National Average									3.05	

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

Section D: Quality of the Standards

	D-1	D-2	D-3	D-4	D-5	D-6	Total	Average	Grades
Alabama	4	3	4	4	4	3	22	3.67	A
Alaska	3	3	1	1	1	1	10	1.67	D
Arizona	4	4	4	0	0	3	15	2.50	C
Arkansas	3	1	3	1	3	3	14	2.33	C
California	4	4	4	3	4	3	22	3.67	A
Colorado	3	3	3	0	0	1	10	1.67	D
Connecticut	1	1	1	0	4	1	8	1.33	D
Delaware	4	3	3	1	4	1	16	2.67	C
Florida	3	3	3	1	3	1	14	2.33	C
Georgia	4	4	4	4	3	3	22	3.67	A
Hawaii	1	1	1	1	4	1	9	1.50	D
Idaho	3	4	3	3	3	1	17	2.83	B
Illinois	4	4	3	0	4	3	18	3.00	B
Indiana	4	4	4	4	0	3	19	3.17	B
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	4	4	1	0	3	1	13	2.17	C
Kentucky	4	4	3	0	4	1	16	2.67	C
Louisiana	4	4	4	3	3	4	22	3.67	A
Maine	3	3	3	0	4	1	14	2.33	C
Maryland	4	4	3	0	0	1	12	2.00	C
Massachusetts	4	4	4	4	4	3	23	3.83	A
Michigan	1	1	1	0	4	1	8	1.33	D
Minnesota	4	3	4	2	4	3	20	3.33	B
Mississippi	3	3	3	4	4	3	20	3.33	B
Missouri	4	3	3	0	3	1	14	2.33	C
Montana	3	1	1	0	1	1	7	1.17	F
Nebraska	4	3	1	0	3	1	12	2.00	C
Nevada	4	3	4	0	3	3	17	2.83	B
New Hampshire	4	4	3	1	4	1	17	2.83	B
New Jersey	3	3	3	0	0	1	10	1.67	D
New Mexico	1	1	1	0	0	1	4	0.67	F
New York	4	4	3	3	4	3	21	3.50	A
North Carolina	4	4	3	0	4	3	18	3.00	B
North Dakota	4	4	4	0	0	1	13	2.17	C
Ohio	4	3	3	0	0	1	11	1.83	C
Oklahoma	4	4	4	1	1	3	17	2.83	B
Oregon	4	4	4	0	3	3	18	3.00	B
Pennsylvania	4	4	3	0	4	1	16	2.67	C
Rhode Island	3	3	1	1	3	1	12	2.00	C
South Carolina	4	4	4	0	3	3	18	3.00	B
South Dakota	3	4	4	4	3	3	21	3.50	A
Tennessee	1	1	1	0	1	1	5	0.83	F
Texas	4	4	4	0	4	3	19	3.17	B
Utah	3	3	1	0	4	1	12	2.00	C
Vermont	3	3	1	1	1	1	10	1.67	D
Virginia	4	3	3	0	3	3	16	2.67	C
Washington	1	1	3	0	4	1	10	1.67	D
Washington, DC	4	4	4	0	0	1	13	2.17	C
West Virginia	3	4	4	0	4	3	18	3.00	B
Wisconsin	1	3	3	0	4	1	12	2.00	C
Wyoming	1	1	3	0	0	1	6	1.00	F
National Average								2.44	

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

Section E: Features That Impede Learning (Negative Criteria)

	E-1	E-2	E-3	E-4	E-5	E-6	Total	Average
Alabama	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Alaska	4	1	0	0	0	1	6	1.0
Arizona	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
Arkansas	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
California	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
Colorado	0	3	0	0	1	1	5	0.8
Connecticut	4	3	4	0	1	4	16	2.7
Delaware	4	4	4	1	1	0	14	2.3
Florida	4	1	1	0	1	1	8	1.3
Georgia	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	0.3
Hawaii	1	0	1	0	3	1	6	1.0
Idaho	4	1	0	0	0	1	6	1.0
Illinois	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
Indiana	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	4	1	1	0	0	0	6	1.0
Kentucky	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	0.8
Louisiana	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
Maine	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	0.3
Maryland	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	0.8
Massachusetts	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Michigan	4	3	4	0	0	0	11	1.8
Minnesota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Mississippi	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	0.8
Missouri	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	0.8
Montana	4	3	3	0	1	1	12	2.0
Nebraska	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0.5
Nevada	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
New Hampshire	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
New Jersey	4	1	0	0	1	0	6	1.0
New Mexico	4	3	1	0	0	1	9	1.5
New York	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	0.5
North Carolina	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
North Dakota	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
Ohio	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	0.5
Oklahoma	4	0	0	0	1	1	6	1.0
Oregon	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
Pennsylvania	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.2
Rhode Island	1	1	0	0	0	0	2	0.3
South Carolina	4	0	0	0	0	0	4	0.7
South Dakota	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Tennessee	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	0.5
Texas	4	1	0	0	0	0	5	0.8
Utah	4	3	3	0	1	1	12	2.0
Vermont	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0.3
Virginia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Washington	4	4	0	3	3	4	18	3.0
Washington, DC	4	1	0	0	0	1	6	1.0
West Virginia	1	1	0	0	0	1	3	0.5
Wisconsin	0	3	1	0	0	0	4	0.7
Wyoming	4	1	1	0	0	1	7	1.2
National Average							0.74	

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

Section F: Further Uses of Standards

	F-1	F-2	F-3	F-4	F-5	Total	Average
Alabama	4	3	3	1	4	15	3.00
Alaska	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.60
Arizona	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.40
Arkansas	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.20
California	4	0	2	4	3	13	2.60
Colorado	4	2	4	2	2	14	2.80
Connecticut	2	0	0	0	3	5	1.00
Delaware	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.40
Florida	2	0	2	3	4	11	2.20
Georgia	4	2	3	0	3	12	2.40
Hawaii	0	0	0	0	4	4	0.80
Idaho	2	2	2	2	3	11	2.20
Illinois	3	1	4	3	3	14	2.80
Indiana	1	0	1	1	3	6	1.20
Iowa	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kansas	1	0	1	0	1	3	0.60
Kentucky	2	4	3	0	3	12	2.40
Louisiana	2	0	2	0	3	7	1.40
Maine	3	3	3	0	0	9	1.80
Maryland	3	0	1	0	0	4	0.80
Massachusetts	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.00
Michigan	3	4	4	3	3	17	3.40
Minnesota	3	0	1	0	3	7	1.40
Mississippi	2	4	4	0	3	13	2.60
Missouri	3	4	4	0	1	12	2.40
Montana	2	0	0	0	1	3	0.60
Nebraska	4	4	4	0	4	16	3.20
Nevada	2	0	2	0	3	7	1.40
New Hampshire	2	2	2	3	3	12	2.40
New Jersey	2	0	2	0	2	6	1.20
New Mexico	2	0	2	3	3	10	2.00
New York	4	2	4	3	2	15	3.00
North Carolina	1	1	0	0	3	5	1.00
North Dakota	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.20
Ohio	2	0	2	0	2	6	1.20
Oklahoma	2	2	2	4	3	13	2.60
Oregon	2	0	0	0	1	3	0.60
Pennsylvania	2	2	3	0	3	10	2.00
Rhode Island	1	1	0	0	3	5	1.00
South Carolina	1	1	1	0	3	6	1.20
South Dakota	1	0	1	0	1	3	0.60
Tennessee	2	0	2	0	1	5	1.00
Texas	4	3	1	3	3	14	2.80
Utah	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.60
Vermont	3	0	4	0	0	7	1.40
Virginia	0	0	0	2	3	5	1.00
Washington	1	0	1	0	0	2	0.40
Washington, DC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
West Virginia	2	4	0	0	3	9	1.80
Wisconsin	4	4	3	0	2	13	2.60
Wyoming	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.60
National Average							1.96

* Indicates the state had no standards at the time of review.

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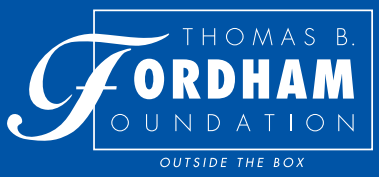

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